

The Listener

Published every Thursday by the British Broadcasting Corporation



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Whitsun 1951

World Review

FOR MAY

includes

The world glows with mortal divinity;
The red turns gray, The ash creeps up
on the flame O heavenly foreigner!
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The Listener

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CONTENTS

THE FESTIVAL OF BRITAIN:

On With the Festivals! (J. B. Priestley) ...	739
Leading Article: The Merry Heart ...	744
Photographs of the Week ...	756
Art at the South Bank Exhibition (Francis Watson) ...	766

THE WORLD TODAY:

The Budget and an Armed Economy (R. C. Tress) ...	741
Has the Motorist been 'Soaked'? (K. L. Kelly) ...	743
The New Society—I. The Historical Approach (E. H. Carr) ...	747
Decline of the Imagination (Edwin Muir) ...	753

WHAT THEY ARE SAYING (foreign broadcasts) ...	744
---	-----

DID YOU HEAR THAT? (microphone miscellany) ...	745
--	-----

ARCHITECTURE:

Post-war Housing in London (Oliver Cox) ...	750
---	-----

RELIGION:

Self-Interest as a Motive (A. R. Vidler) ...	754
--	-----

NEWS DIARY ...	756
----------------	-----

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

From Stephen Pollak, D. J. McCracken, G. N. A. Vesey, Jeremy Noble, Tom Hopkinson, A. H. Summers, A. Pickles, Frederick May, Francis Watson, Philip Hope-Wallace, Kingsley Martin and Eric Westbrook...	758
---	-----

LITERATURE:

The Work of James Thurber (Honor Tracy) ...	760
Towards 'The Cocktail Party' (Henry Reed) ...	763
The Sea-Mists of the Winter (Wyndham Lewis) ...	765
The Listener's Book Chronicle ...	767

GARDENING:

More Work in the Garden (F. Streeter) ...	762
---	-----

POEMS:

Sonnet (W. S. Merwin) ...	761
Forlorn Campaspe (Leslie Barringer) ...	761

CRITIC ON THE HEARTH:

Television (Reginald Pound) ...	770
Broadcast Drama (Philip Hope-Wallace) ...	771
The Spoken Word (Martin Armstrong) ...	771
Broadcast Music (Dyneley Hussey) ...	771

MUSIC:

Janáček and Jenůfa (Richard Gorer)...	772
---------------------------------------	-----

ADVICE FOR THE HOUSEWIFE ...	775
------------------------------	-----

CROSSWORD NO. 1,097 ...	775
-------------------------	-----

On With the Festivals!

By J. B. PRIESTLEY

ALTHOUGH the Festival of Britain is now with us, there are people who are still dead against it. An old friend of ours came to lunch on Friday, and as soon as we mentioned the Festival he started banging the table and screeched like a wounded peacock. The whole project, he screamed at us, was ill-advised, badly-executed, a monstrous waste of money, and typical of this Government—incidentally, a Government he had been condemning for years for its drab austerity.

He did not convert me. I am strongly in favour of this and any other Festival. Although I may neither look nor sound like it, I am a festive type. Sometimes I see references by journalists to what they call 'that grand old saying *Let the People Sing*'; and I take this opportunity of informing them that there is no such grand old saying, for I invented it twelve years ago to serve as the title of a novel. But the sentiment behind it is both grand and old. We often forget that our ancestors were regarded as the most recklessly convivial folk in Europe, for ever singing, drinking and kissing—and shocking Venetian and Spanish ambassadors, and other sober visitors. This is one English tradition I applaud. I believe in hard work and high jinks.

One of our more recent dangers has been the increasing production of dim debilitated types, who do not know how to work, or how to play, who can neither join in nor rebel, who drift through

life, open-mouthed and codfish-eyed, without gusto, fire and fun, belonging neither to God nor to the devil. Such people, even more than the rest of us, need a few festivals. But we all need them. Even official economists, who now spend too much time designing our lives for us, would have to admit so much.

Of course we cannot afford all these magnificent pavilions and floods of light. From this same point of view, none of us as individuals can afford anything jovial and refreshing any more, and we ought to keep to the treadmill, and live on crusts and gruel. But then this point of view is not only ungenerous; it is not even sensible. Keen enjoyment, zest for life, a sudden lift of the spirit, create energy; and energy is what we need, if only to survive. And another thing. If we British do not deserve to show off and enjoy ourselves, then who in the name of thunder, in this mad world, does deserve it? We have fought the two worst wars in history from beginning to end; we have been burned, blasted and battered; we have pawned, scraped, saved and queued up patiently for all manner of scrag-ends; we have set the world an example of public spirit, tolerance, self-discipline and patience; so—by Jupiter!—either there must be *no* enjoyment in this world, which is ridiculous, or we British are now entitled to our own slice of it. So—on with the festivals! Not only the monster shows in London, but all the little shows all over the

Kingdom, including the place I now seem to know best—Farbridge!

The whole thing began for me last Thursday night, when I attended the formal opening of the Royal Festival Hall. I sat in the front of what are known there as the 'Terrace Stalls'—very good for seeing and hearing—and as we were not the very important people, who are always wearing dress clothes, I was haunted throughout this evening of pomp and circumstance by the homely and rather melancholy smell of moth balls. I think nobody has written a solemn ode to the moth ball. Yet on almost all great occasions—christenings, weddings, funerals, and in the presence of kings and princes—we cannot escape the moth ball, whispering mournfully, for it is not a hopeful ally, to our noses. On this occasion of full evening dress, with orders and decorations being worn, I noted once again that people so dressed and decorated seem to be far heavier and slower than people in ordinary clothes, so that they move like ceremonial elephants, always in slow motion, and it takes a dickens of a time for a row of seats to be occupied or emptied.

A Glorious Din

I also noted—and marvelled at again—my fellow citizens when they are wearing their orders and decorations, for some of the dullest fellows suddenly look like Christmas trees, and mild old fogeys, who have spent most of their lives arranging agenda or moving amendments, now blaze and glitter like Napoleon's marshals. But this occasion, I must confess, was a fine example of that pageantry we do so well here in London: the choristers in coloured gowns; the Royal trumpeters in their Tudor finery; pretty Princesses in boxes, like chocolates; ribbons and stars and medals everywhere—all like a pantomime *de luxe*. In this atmosphere, the cheerful bragging of the eighteenth century, clashing and banging in 'Rule Britannia', seemed far more acceptable than the pompous Edwardian proclamations of 'Land of Hope and Glory', although Sir Malcolm Sargent, who was having the time of his life, gave us brilliant performances of both pieces—a glorious din. And after some years of the Albert Hall, whose vast echoing spaces make a full orchestra not much louder or more impressive than a solitary oboe, it was glorious to be overwhelmed with sound again.

What about this Royal Festival Hall? I wish I could tell you in one short sentence. Perhaps I shall come to love it as I did the dear old Queen's Hall, with its faded dignity, its warm tone; but time will have to work hard on me. Some parts of the new Hall please the eye; others offend it, notably those boxes, so fussy, so cute, which make you feel that a giant has just hurried out of the building, having done some hasty packing, and left open several chests of drawers. On the other hand, the lighting is the best I have ever seen in any concert hall. The tone, from where I sat, was peculiarly and startlingly brilliant, but whether it will make a rich comforting mixture, and be equally suitable for Mozart or Strauss, I cannot tell, and merely feel a trifle dubious. Odd— isn't it?—that now we have the science of acoustics, complete with experts and instruments, there is so much difficulty in building a satisfactory concert hall or theatre, whereas in the old days, they just built a Covent Garden or Drury Lane, a Manchester Free Trade Hall or Leeds Grand Theatre, and seemed to have no trouble at all. We seem to have progressed in theory and lagged in practice.

Music, Food and Drink

But there is one excellent feature in the Royal Festival Hall, and that is that it is generously provided with wide landings, lounges, and places where concert-goers may eat and drink. This is something I have always wanted, for after listening to great music and having mind and soul purged, it is a grand thing not to be compelled to hurry out into the night, but to sit with friends, all equally purged, to eat and drink and talk out of the new-found heart's ease. We did this on Thursday night—though without much soul-purging or heart's-easing, and in an atmosphere still raw with newness and anxious organisation—and then there followed the best time of all, at about eleven o'clock, when we crossed Westminster Bridge, and then turned along the Embankment. For then we saw the lights on both sides of the river in all their glory, and one of us—a lecturer in economics too—cried out like a dazzled child. In that moment, London was a city in a fairy-tale, with the Skylon, a glittering riddle of a symbol, like some genie's device in the *Arabian Nights*.

And I said something then in hot blood, that I will dare to repeat here and now, with Broadcasting House chilling my arteries, and it is this—that if I had my way I would have the central reach of London river lit up in this glorious fashion every night, Festival or no Festival,

and never let it go dark again. I know, I know—we are short of fuel, we have electricity cuts, there is too much loading, whatever that is; but even if it meant having special generators on barges in the Thames, that is how the capital city of the British Commonwealth should be illuminated, to rejoice the hearts of free men, to proclaim that our life here is not only a problem, a struggle, a feat of endurance, but also still at times an enchantment. Not only a widening tragedy, a bitter comedy, but even now, at this late hour, a kind of fairy-tale.

Next morning—and alas!—how often we have to say 'next morning' in that rueful tone—when we returned for the formal opening of the Festival grounds, all that enchantment had vanished and might never have been. The weather began it, being as much like a May morning as I am like a May Queen. There must be some great demon, master of air pressures, whom we British have offended, so that now he hates us. It was the sort of morning that takes all colour out of London. The young architects and designers—gallant souls—had seen in their mind's eye a beautiful May morning for this opening, and had piled on the colour gloriously to greet the sun and to dazzle and delight us. But this monster out of November swallowed it all, and we only caught the intention. It was the sort of morning too when all traffic and transport arrangements seem hostile or lunatic. We were in a novel by Kafka. There seemed to be too many closed roads, too many barriers, too many police. I could easily bore thirty minutes clean out of your lives by describing how we had to walk to find a taxi to take us to the parking ground and then had to walk further still because it was not the right parking ground; but I will spare you. But it was that sort of morning. And even though I spent some time in the Lion and Unicorn Pavilion, which is enormous fun and just my kind of thing, and looked in other pavilions, all excellent except perhaps for some of the state-ments they made, which were far from being capital examples of our literary genius; I will not try my hand at describing anything. For this was the wrong morning. Even apart from the sullen weather, and the tortuous official arrangements, it was not right, for the real people were not there, to wonder and admire, but only important persons, with special tickets of admission; and this sort of crowd, all dressed up and expecting Royalty and not really out to enjoy itself, is not really what Mr. Barry and Mr. Casson and their enthusiastic colleagues had in mind. Besides—to tell you the truth—I am myself at my worst on these occasions, out of temper most of the time, a fat scowling man, not wanting to be educated or entertained but only anxious to go home and smoke his pipe in peace.

'Stirred and Rather Moved'

When the bright sun and the eager real people arrive together, then all will be different, though no doubt crowded and rather uncomfortable; and I will try to report some of it, even though it turns me into a hermit the rest of my days. But I will offer this brief note: that although much of the art and decoration and design of this Festival is the natural expression of a generation younger than mine, and so is somewhat removed in spirit and temper and style, for at heart I am a pre-1914 type and do not really live in this functional-machine age, nevertheless I was stirred and rather moved by the gallant inventiveness of what I saw on the South Bank. The circumstances, the essential conditions, had been difficult, perhaps too difficult; but I had a vision of a whole gang of youngish untidy enthusiasts who refused to be daunted by vast programmes and lack of space, shortage of materials and sullen weather, but planned and sketched with zest, gaily invented, and defied, on our behalf as well as theirs, the foul fiends of dullness, defeat and pessimism. And this is as it should be, in our Festival, for our whole circumstances, the essential condition of our life here are not too far removed from theirs. We are 50,000,000 people on a small island, incapable of feeding us; and we lack space and materials, and know the bitter treachery of weather, and seem to have so little time. So let us be as zestful, as inventive and ingenious, as gallant, as they have been.

Meanwhile, what is happening to our visitors? I had two American friends in for a meal, and one of them, belonging to my profession, is paying his first visit here. And how did they like it, I asked them. Wonderful, wonderful, they told me, and they are a candid couple. They were enjoying everything they saw, and everybody they met, except the two women who serve at a certain counter in a certain famous shop. Those two women alone had been haughty and rude. Never mind, I told them, they have been equally haughty and rude to us for hundreds of years. Well, as these two friends would say: 'Be seeing you! Have fun!'—*Home and General Overseas Services*



Spending for defence: shells being made in a royal ordnance factory

The Budget and an Armed Economy

By R. C. TRESS

THERE have been a number of criticisms of Mr. Gaitskell's Budget. Personally, I do not believe, as he obviously does, that the tax programme is on a big enough scale to avoid inflation this year. But, as he says, conclusions on this score are matters of judgment. I propose here to leave that rather pernicky question on one side and to look at our budgetary problem in rather broader terms.

Our object is to establish a well-armed state, while at the same time preserving the welfare state, and paying our way with our neighbours, and continuing to advance in technique and efficiency. And we want to do this whilst keeping the right of people to choose their jobs and in a large measure to decide for themselves the way in which they should spend their income. I see no reason why this cannot be done. But it raises some serious questions: First, what kind of armed state is it that we are intending to establish? Second, how big a slice of the national resources will it require? Third, what are the best working arrangements for such an economy? Mr. George Marshall, the United States Secretary of State, said the other day:

The best we can hope for is a prolonged tension rather than an all-out war. What we hope and pray for at the present time is that, as between the two, it may be a prolonged tension, during which we can build our strength and resources, get organised in western Europe, and get straightened out, we hope, in the Far East.

That is a simple enough statement of our common objective. But it is easy to see what technical difficulties it creates. Since we have to build up arms and train men fast enough to be in a defensible position by the time we may need to defend ourselves, we must make a fairly intensive effort for a short space of time. Then, once we are over that hump—assuming that we are not attacked—we shall have to keep our preparations ticking over. For a good many items—army clothing, for example—once stocks have been built up, there may be next to no further drain on resources. Obviously, too, new factories and storage depots have only to be built once and most of them will have been finished in the hump period. But turnover in new weapons, to keep pace with technical improvements and the movements of our potential enemies, may make quite a considerable annual charge on our national income. The defence

forces, moreover, require men as well as materials, and there could be some very tricky problems in keeping up their establishments. Suppose that volunteers for the services are too few? We shall have to have a scheme for raising conscripts. A workable conscription scheme for this country when we need, not all the men we can spare, as in war time, but only, say, one quarter of that number, is not at all an easy thing to invent.

But while we are contemplating these defence problems, we have also to reckon with the underlying assumption that we may at any time be plunged into war. Short-term, the main point here is that we should go for what we can get quickly. It may be galling to the technicians, but it will surely be militarily much sounder to go for inferior weapons that we can produce forthwith, rather than to go for technically superior weapons for which we have first to build a factory. But I say it may be sounder to go for the inferior stuff. Obviously, calculated risks—and some sheer guesses—have to be taken.

But there is another side to the question: what factories should we be building? In the last war, this country was fully mobilised both militarily and industrially; but would it have to be done in the same way another time? Obviously, in the short run, we and the other allies must use whatever plant we have, wherever it may be. But when we are making long-term plans for defence production, might it not be better for us to be regarded as potentially not an arsenal but a forward area, concentrating on assembly and repair, and having new plants sited more safely in the United States and Canada? This would simplify our war-time problems. The import of raw materials in the face of attacks on our shipping or at the ports would matter far less; and we could therefore go a good deal further than last time if necessary in shutting down production on this side of the Atlantic. But in the period of armed peace, this planning of war production on an allied rather than a national basis would land us with an export problem. The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation would have to decide, first, in what countries it is strategically best that armaments should be made; and second, how the costs of defence preparation should be distributed between the allies with their differing abilities to pay. And if it then worked out

that we ought to be bearing the cost of more than, for strategic reasons, it fell to us to produce, we should have to sell the Americans and Canadians more cars and washing-machines—the things which the allies could dispense with altogether in war. I do not know that this is right. I do know that the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation ought to be thinking along these international lines if the allies are to make the most of their opportunities and at the least cost in sacrifice of other things.

And that—the least cost in sacrifice of other things—brings me to my second question: How big a slice of national resources will be taken up by this new concentration on defence? It cannot be emphasised too strongly that this state of armed preparedness which we are aiming at is something very different from war, not only in such obvious matters as the absence of casualty lists and of aerial bombardment, but also because, though defence clearly is the number one priority, it is still only one of several interests. Indeed, there are others hardly less important than defence itself. And the problem is very much complicated by the fact that though some of these secondary interests—exports and capital creation—are ones which we should readily sacrifice if there were a war, they are vitally important in the armed economy.

Running Down Capital

In actual war, if we were able to follow the example of 1939-45, we should be putting three times as much manpower and resources into defence as we shall be doing at the peak of the present defence programmes. But where would these resources come from? Some would be at the expense of consumption. Some would come from having more men and women in employment and people working longer hours. But the bulk would come from running down capital instead of building it up as we are at present, capital at home and capital abroad.

But this way of getting armaments is only possible because of the extremity of the danger and because in the minds of those who set about planning a war there is a limit to the period it will take to defeat the enemy. One looks at the assets one has, and at how long they have to be made to last, and spreads them out accordingly. At the beginning of the last war, for example, the strategists said we were to reckon on a three years' war and the economists then advised as to the rate at which overseas assets could be liquidated. (When the assumption failed, of course, we had to rely upon American aid.) But for this kind of prodigality, there has to be a time limit. In an unlimited period of war preparedness, the problems of maintaining a population of 50,000,000—problems which depend upon foreign trade and continuously rising efficiency of production for their solution—are still paramount. Industrial capital must be maintained and augmented. Likewise, the balance of payments. This means that the war budget must be filled, either out of the current standard of living or else by productivity expanding faster than the defence programme itself. In the United States, the President's Council of Economic Advisers have announced their view that the American economy can provide for the whole of their increased defence programme—a three-year programme not unlike our own—out of increased production. I think I should add that to do this will mean doubling the recent rate of expansion of output; that to do the doubling requires exceptional measures; and that I know of at least one economist who has cast grave doubts on the possibility. But, if it is possible, it is certainly the ideal solution.

What are our chances of doing the same thing? Frankly, I do not know. It would not require anything very exceptional. In our case, to keep the same rate of advance in output as in the last two years is all that is wanted. All the same, most students of the subject, the Government's own economists included, will be very surprised if it happens. Last year the economic machine was running particularly smoothly. By contrast, it will have this year and next all sorts of upsets to contend with. In the field of armaments production there is a large question-mark concerning how quickly an organisation switching from making peace-time products to making war weapons can pick up its stroke—and subsequently increase the pace. And quite clearly there are going to be raw material shortages, not only from imports but also from coal and steel. Taking these two factors together, the Economic Survey claimed that we might manage half the rate of growth this year that we managed last year. Even that may be a bit optimistic. This is enough, I take it, to explain the cuts in the standard of living, small but tiresome, which we are having to face this year. What of the years to follow? Production may pick up. The rearmament programme will still be having its teething troubles and there are not many signs (unless the international tension eases) that supplies of raw materials

will be much more plentiful. Moreover, some of our increased production will be offset by our having to give more in exports for our imports. And the workpeople and others responsible for the higher output will lay claim to some improvement in their standards as a reward—leaving less for the rest of us.

But there is, at present, no justification for heavy gloom about the standard of living. It will be clipped at the edges, but with any luck at all not much worse than that. What matters about this, I think, is not the precise amount of the change but the fact that we are changing direction. It is this which I find alarming. Whatever the exact figures, the proportion of the national resources absorbed by the Government, which has been getting steadily smaller since 1945, will now rise again. And instead of wage-earners, salary-earners and business-men being left with a progressively large proportion of their incomes to spend as they please, that proportion will once again decline. I have said, of course, that there will be a hump in rearmament expenditure, after which it will not claim so much of our resources. But how hardly the intensive period of rearmament hits us and how quickly we get over the hump depends not only upon the programme itself but also on our continuing to get a rising national income. This raises perhaps the most important question of all: what ought to be the working arrangements of our armed economy—or, more crudely, what is to make it tick?

In war time, the economy is dominated by a single purpose, to win the war, and the distribution of the national resources is correspondingly straightforward. Consumption is run down both at home and abroad. Technical advance is concentrated in particular fields. For the most part, the state is the initiator and the financier. But the war economy is not only simple in its objectives; it has, as I said, a time limit. Some firms get enlarged facilities, others are more or less closed down. Some persons go into the Forces, others remain in the factories. But it is all 'for the duration'. And for that limited period differences can be ignored and competition abandoned, without serious opposition being raised. Thus, not only does the war itself and the urge to win it provide the motive force of the economy, but the government controls which are necessary to direct that force are for the most part readily accepted and complied with. There is a lot of volunteer effort; and people are more willing than usual to be told what to do.

The armed economy which is not at war is quite different from this. The Government cannot work up and maintain any great popular enthusiasm simply for the amassing of war weapons and stores. We have to accept the fact that we have a much more complex job to do; and with no more than the ordinary incentives to provide the driving force. We must, therefore, look at these ordinary incentives. What the wage-earner is really looking for, surely, is to secure a standard of living which he and his family can enjoy. For the business-man, whose standard of living is more secure, it is probably the opportunity to expand his business which most matters. For both these groups, and particularly the latter, the last twelve years have been something of a frustration. But half of that period was the war, when other motives were in play. And for the last six years, though neither group has had all its own way, there has been steady improvement: fewer things rationed, more controls lifted, more licences given. I think it would be very dangerous to assume that we can simply reverse that movement and expect production to go steadily forward just as before.

A 'Tricky Business'

I think we must try to minimise the extent of the reversal. We must prune government expenditure and restrict public works so as to leave more scope for private spending—on ordinary consumer goods by the wage and salary earners, and on capital goods by private business. I agree that it is a tricky business to do that both fairly and efficiently, but I think we must make the attempt. The whole economic machine, financial as well as industrial, needs to be tuned up. It is an odd thing that the nineteenth century, so much freer of war threats than the twentieth, was nevertheless so much more prepared for war on the side of government finance. More than a century ago, Sir Henry Parnell—almost as much a founder of British public finance as Mr. Gladstone—said:

If no preparation is made, when war shall happen, everything will be in confusion, and all money matters in great embarrassment. There will be no time for deliberation; everything will be done in a hurry; every kind of expedient will be adopted that promises the means of overcoming the difficulty of the moment.

These words are still true, and that phrase about 'every kind of expedient' has an uncomfortable ring.—*Third Programme*

Has the Motorist been 'Soaked'?

By K. L. KELLY

THE morning after the Chancellor of the Exchequer had announced his Budget proposals in Parliament, one of the national newspapers came out with the banner headline 'Budget Soaks Motorists'. At the same time there were cartoons on a similar theme, showing for instance a woebegone private motorist, his hand deep in his trouser pocket, looking doubtfully at a petrol pump while his dejected family—including the dog—sit in the nearby car gazing longingly at the distant prospect of countryside and sea.

Tax on Motor Fuel

That was an illustration of a widespread public reaction to the Chancellor's proposals for increased motor taxation. You will remember that they were twofold; first, an extra 4½d. a gallon on motor fuel, and second, the doubling of the purchase tax on new cars. But the additional fuel tax will bring in about three times as much revenue this year as the increased purchase tax, and so it seems that there is in some quarters an assumption that the main effect of the Budget will be to put up the cost of pleasure motoring—whatever that might be. That is quite wrong in fact, but it is a persistent myth and it is high time it was exploded. The basic fact is that for every gallon of fuel used in motor-cars and motor-cycles, about two gallons—twice as much—go to others such as industrial and commercial vehicles, buses and coaches—the lorry which delivers your coal; the tradesman's van; the bus that takes you to work; or the coach that will take you on that visit to your parents—or your children—at Whitsun. So, to begin with, we can see that two-thirds of the petrol is bought, not out of the motorist's trouser pocket, but indirectly by all who consign goods, or travel as fare-paying passengers, by road.

But now let us examine more closely the remaining third which is used in private vehicles. A comparison between the amount of petrol allocated to motorists in supplementary allowances during the petrol ration days, and the total consumption since derationing, shows that more than half of this fuel is required for essential purposes—in other words, on duties which are vital to industry and commerce, and to the professions. Where is our family motorist, out for a jaunt, now? He is small fry as a petrol consumer, when compared with his fellow road users, for less than one gallon in six is earmarked for him. And he deserves too to have this said on his behalf: our tourist industry, like any other exporter, invisible or not, must be founded on a solid and flourishing home market. That home market is largely the family motorist, and as his petrol costs more and more, so his tours become shorter and shorter. Hotels in the remoter districts—usually the finest touring grounds for our overseas visitors—lose vital custom.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer of course knows all this perfectly well and he has made a cool calculation of the issues at stake before putting on that extra 4½d. When presenting his Budget he said that he had seen little sign of damage from the extra 9d. a gallon imposed in the previous Budget. He estimated that the additional 4½d. would raise the operating costs of commercial and passenger transport by no more than 2 per cent. Not enough, in his view, to justify any increase in fares or freight charges. On the other hand, the operators claim that they can point to increases in commodity prices as a direct result of the raising of the petrol tax last year, and they foresee further increases as a result of the additional 4½d. a gallon now imposed. In other words it is the cost of living, not the cost of motoring, which is the point at issue in connection with the petrol tax.

And now, what about the doubling of the car purchase tax? The Chancellor was very frank about this. He said that as home demand for new cars vastly exceeds the available supply, and having noticed the prices which second-hand cars are fetching, he does not expect the raising of new car prices to have any adverse effect on the industry except in the case of the makers of high-class products. So far as they are concerned, said Mr. Gaitskell, the rearmament programme has need of their highly skilled technicians anyway. The motor industry has replied by reminding the Government that it is the country's chief

exporter and that its high-class products have a great prestige value. And it points out that, in spite of the opinion which the Government may have to the contrary, a healthy home market is an essential base upon which the industry's prosperity depends.

But what about the individual motorist? Imagine the position of the motorist who three or four years ago placed an order for a new car and has not yet taken delivery because of the small allocation of output to the home market. During those years he has seen his cherished car coming gradually nearer to his place on the dealer's list, and meanwhile steadily going out of the range of his pocket. The list price has gone up because it costs more to make. Ironically enough, last year's increased petrol tax is partly to blame for that. Now the double purchase tax has added another £150 or so to the price of the popular range of cars, and very much more to the top price vehicles. The Chancellor may be right when he expects that the 80,000 new cars available to the home market this year will still find buyers. With over 1,000,000 orders on the books it would be strange if they did not. But my sympathies are with the customer who will now have to step sadly away from the head of the queue and return to his faithful pre-war car, of an age which would have qualified it for the museum not so very long ago. These old cars are a living tribute to our motor industry, and fine sturdy creatures they are for the most part. But in running repairs and petrol consumption they cost their frustrated owners more than the new cars they cannot get. Worse still, they cost more in annual tax, as they are rated at 25s. per unit of horse-power, instead of the £10 flat rate enjoyed by the owners of new cars.

That brings me to something that was not in the Budget, to the consternation of 1,500,000 car owners. It contained no measure for the reform of the present dual system of car licence duties. Let me remind you of the present position. Cars first registered before January 1, 1947, are taxed according to horse-power on a scale of 25s. a year per unit. For instance, a ten horse-power car costs £12 10s. a year, a twelve horse-power car £15, up to the larger twenty and thirty horse-power cars which cost as much as £37 10s. On the other hand, a new car is taxed at the flat rate of £10 a year no matter how big or small the engine. This flat rate was introduced in 1947, at the request of the motor industry and the motoring organisations, to free manufacturers from the shackles of the sliding scale tax which had made the ten and twelve horse-power cars the standard vehicles for this country, to the detriment of the industry's chances in competition for world markets. This, incidentally, is a striking example of the far-reaching effects of a particular system of taxation, for it was the horse-power tax more than anything else which evolved the typical pre-war low-powered British car.

Grievance of Old Car Owners

That was all to the good so far as it went, and the £10 tax has undoubtedly helped our motor industry to become the country's chief exporter. It has also brought to British motorists the benefits of larger-car motoring. But it has left the owner of the older car with a steadily mounting grievance as he finds himself paying a much higher annual tax than his more fortunate neighbour with a cheaper-to-run new car.

Every year since 1947 successive Chancellors have been urged by the motoring organisations, and in Parliament, to make the £10 tax universal for all except the tiny cars which would not qualify for so much in any case. It was raised again on the Budget proposals last month, and Mr. Gaitskell's reply was that it would cost £6,000,000 in loss of revenue and although he agreed it would benefit the owner of pre-war cars larger than eight horse-power he did not feel that in the circumstances of the country one could afford such a sum for that class this year 'merely because', in his own words, 'it would be convenient to tidy up this slightly anomalous position'.

The motoring organisations are, of course, up in arms. They claim that this is primarily a matter of justice and that considerations of revenue should not therefore be the sole criterion. Equity, they say, has now

(continued on page 762)

The Listener

What They Are Saying

Foreign broadcasts on festivals

All communications should be addressed to the Editor of THE LISTENER, Broadcasting House, London, W.1. The articles in THE LISTENER being mainly reprints of broadcast talks, original contributions are not invited, and the B.B.C. cannot accept responsibility for unsolicited manuscript matter, whether literary or musical, which is submitted for its consideration. Articles in THE LISTENER do not necessarily represent the views of the B.B.C., nor do the reproductions of talks necessarily correspond verbatim with the broadcast script. Yearly subscription rates (including postage): inland and overseas, £1. Shorter periods, pro rata. Postage for single copies of this issue: inland and overseas, 14d. Subscriptions should be sent to the B.B.C. Publication Offices, 35 Marylebone High Street, London, W.1, or any newsagent.

The Merry Heart

THE Festival has begun and the chief need, as we write, is a spell of fine, warm weather. Given that, we should all be having a good time. For a festival on the scale of the present one is a new experience; and to a generation that has had its fill of new experiences, a great many of them highly unpleasant, it is, *pace* the grumblers (if there are any left) a good mark against this present experience that it is one we can be glad of and enjoy. But it is of course more than that—more than merely a pleasurable occasion. It has been planned as a visible sign of national achievement and confidence, and is, in the words His Majesty the King used when last week he declared the Festival open, 'a symbol of Britain's abiding courage and vitality'. The assurance the King gave that many of the activities and displays will be of lasting value, that they will maintain the prestige of our arts and industries abroad, and will show how vital a part is played in industry by scientific imagination and research—this assurance powerfully underpins the hopes of those who for so long have laboured to bring this Festival into being; it makes clear to all of us that in taking our share in the Festival, whether as performers or as spectators, we are contributing to no mere ephemeral entertainment but to a celebration the effects of which should be enduring and beneficent.

Though the Festival belongs to the whole country, it is to the capital, now gay with flags and decked with spring flowers, and more particularly to the South Bank Exhibition, that the eyes of many will turn, the steps of many be directed. Those who have already visited the Exhibition will not need telling—with all deference to the critics who will rightly have their say—that those responsible for the general lay-out of the decorations, appointments, and designs, have gone about their business with imagination and with zest. The features of the South Bank are not solemn, and even a 'pre-1914 type', as Mr. J. B. Priestley describes himself in his talk (reproduced in our columns this week), may be 'stirred and rather moved by the gallant inventiveness of what I saw on the South Bank'. Much that is unexpected and pleasing will be found there—objects of curious and intricate design, eccentricities and humours that shed sidelights on the national character, pleasures adorned with statuary, lofty platforms overlooking London and the winding Thames. The Dome of Discovery, exhibiting the results of British initiative in exploration and scientific research, is brimful of excitements. And much as there is to see on this South Bank, those who cannot manage a visit may enjoy one advantage not possessed by our ancestors in the days of the Great Exhibition of 1851—the bringing to their homes of some impressions, by means of sound broadcasting and television. The story of the Festival will be carried by wireless not only throughout our country, but throughout the world.

We do not in all this forget the other side of the picture, compounded of what is happening beyond our shores—the battles our men are fighting in Korea and Malaya, the ceaseless struggle being waged between East and West for the soul of man, the seemingly elusive hopes of a real and lasting peace. Yet when we remember these things, may we not also remember that by concentrating on that picture only, by abandoning ourselves to gloomy forebodings and thoughts of future horrors, we do no service to ourselves, our country or the world? Better to recall that even in the atomic age armaments are not the only weapons whereby the struggle may be fought and won, and a merry heart is still to be thanked for keeping on the windy side of care.

THE OPENING of the Festival of Britain was the occasion of a number of tributes to this country from the free world. From the United States of America, the *New York Herald Tribune* was quoted as saying:

The recent history of a gallant and undefeated race is memoried by the very sight of the Festival centre in London. Above the rubble of an area bombed during the second world war, Britain has erected buildings which contain the story of her contribution to civilisation during the last hundred years. . . . At home to the world, a democratic Britain sets wide her doors at a time when so many nations erect curtains of secrecy or of fear. . . . It is a mighty exhibition in a myriad ways of how well Britain has fought her economic battles and hidden her scars of war. It is a celebration in which all the free world can find hope.

From India, the *Statesman* was quoted for the following comment:

Three years' hard toil have been devoted to making the country a worthy host to its many overseas visitors who will see how national spirit has risen above the tribulations of a decade which still bears the honourable scars of war.

From Australia, the *Melbourne Herald* was quoted as describing the Festival as 'a brilliant proof of virility and spirit, and a light of confidence in a darkened world'. One of the few references to the Festival from behind the Iron Curtain came from the Czechoslovak radio, which, referring to Mr. Herbert Morrison's suggestion that the U.S.S.R. should stage a Festival of Russia to which foreigners should be invited, replied that the U.S.S.R. did, in fact, have a festival every year—namely May Day, and invited workers' delegations from Britain and elsewhere to attend it. However, both British Railways and Metropolitan-Vickers had refused to allow their employees to accept the invitation—from which it was obvious that 'Morrison is putting down the Iron Curtain with a vengeance'.

Members of the British workers' delegation who did go to Moscow for the May Day festivities were said to have recorded their impressions of the occasion. One member was quoted by a Moscow broadcast to this country as saying of the Soviet Union: 'Here is a free people, demonstrating their loyalty, not only to a leader, but to a way of life'. *Pravda* extolled the moral-political unity of the peoples of the Soviet Union who, 'having saved civilisation from the fascist barbarians', were now engaged in driving towards the ultimate triumph of communism. The May Day demonstrations had shown the 'unconquerable might' of the camp of peace, and the whole world had heard that the Soviet Union would continue to pursue a policy of averting war.

Four days after the May Day celebrations—all an expression of 'peace', came the celebrations of Soviet press day—all in the interests of 'truth'. Great publicity was given to a leading article in *Pravda* (the Russian word for 'truth'), which stated:

The Soviet press has justly earned the warm love and appreciation of the Soviet people and the whole of progressive mankind. It is the freest press in the world and the most highly ideological. It is truth-loving and faithful to the principles closely connected with the masses of the working people.

Pravda, like the rest of the Soviet press and radio, has been at pains to explain how, in the four-power discussions in Paris, the Western Powers are doing everything to sabotage Mr. Gromyko's efforts for co-operation and peace. Last week western commentators displayed considerable firmness in their comments on this long-drawn-out conference. From Paris, the Catholic Conservative *Le Figaro*, referring to Mr. Gromyko's rejection of all three alternative proposals for an agenda recently put forward by the western delegates, commented:

By presenting these three proposals the western delegates were in no way trying to force Mr. Gromyko's hand. The aim was rather to test the Soviet will for an agreement by offering Mr. Gromyko a choice between drafts which go a long way to meet the Soviet Government's wishes. . . . Mr. Gromyko has declared that he reserves the right to give detailed reasons for his refusal later. Will the three agree to let the farce continue in this way? Their patience is great. But is it still of any use at all? The aim of the Western Powers was to make one more test of Soviet sincerity. Already the results seem to be conclusive.

From the United States, the *New York Times* pointed out that although the Soviet Union still had a sizeable advantage over the west in existing armed strength, the balance was now shifting, and the west is now out-producing the entire Soviet bloc by approximately 100 per cent. in equipping modern armed forces.

Did You Hear That?

THE THREAT TO CHOCOLATE

'RECENTLY THERE HAS BEEN a good deal of anxiety about future supplies of cocoa', said SIR HAROLD TEMPANY, formerly Director of Agriculture in Malaya, in the Far Eastern Service. 'Cocoa and chocolate are today important foodstuffs; during the past fifty years production and consumption have increased enormously and the demand continues to grow. Fifty years ago most of the supplies came from Central and South America and the West Indies; since then the great West African cocoa industry has grown up and it is now by far the largest cocoa producing region in the world. And here, as in South America, the cocoa crop is menaced by disease, and as these two areas together produce four-fifths of the world's supplies, you will realise how serious the position is.

'In West Africa the threat is from a virus disease termed "swollen shoot", so called because one of the symptoms is the production of swellings on the branches of trees attacked by it; in South America and the West Indies the threat comes from a fungus disease called "witches' broom", which causes broom-like growths on the pods and branches of cocoa trees. Both diseases are killers and there is not much doubt that if they cannot be controlled the ultimate extinction of the cocoa industry is inevitable. For example, in West Africa about 90,000,000 trees have already perished from the disease there, and so much attention is being paid to the possibility of cocoa growing in other parts of the world where these diseases do not exist.

'It is considered that among possible new areas the far east holds out the greatest promise. Cocoa, as you know, has long been grown on a small scale in some eastern countries, notably in Java and Ceylon, and at present new developments are being undertaken on some scale in Malaya, where cocoa might well form a valuable addition to cultivated crops and reduce excessive dependence on rubber cultivation. These developments are being carried out (with the aid of the best scientific advice) in the conviction that it is only by working in this way that the difficulties which have occurred elsewhere can be avoided. In the Gold Coast and Nigeria the crop is grown on very large numbers of small holdings scattered about through the West African jungle. The total area is very big. In the Gold Coast alone it certainly exceeds 1,000,000 acres; but it is all higgledy-piggledy—hundreds of thousands of small holdings, frequently remote and difficult to get at, planted irregularly and often poorly tended and unkempt—for the crop was introduced into West Africa almost by chance.

'It took quite a long time to recognise the cause of the trouble, and by the time it had been established that "swollen shoot" was a virus disease conveyed by mealy bugs—small wax-covered insects which puncture the bark of trees and suck the plant juices—a large area in the most productive region of the Gold Coast had been devastated. Research has so far failed to reveal any method of curing the disease once it has attacked a cocoa tree, and the only way of arresting its spread is by cutting out infected trees as soon as they are spotted: this is only effective if the number of diseased trees is small.

'Research has shown that "swollen shoot" was not introduced into West Africa; it has always existed there in certain forest trees, which, however, do not show any serious effects from it; they are what are termed "tolerant hosts". It is only when the virus is transmitted from them to cocoa trees that it becomes a source of danger. "Swollen shoot" takes a year and even longer to kill a cocoa tree, but its ultimate death is inevitable. "Witches' broom" disease in the western hemisphere is an almost equally difficult problem, but research in the West Indies has shown that there are strains of cocoa that can resist it. A number of them have been isolated and the problem of control is largely bound up with that of replacing existing susceptible strains with resistant ones. These and other problems are being tackled where systematic research on cocoa began twenty-two years ago, at the

Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture in Trinidad. One of the most important results has been to show how cocoa yields can be increased—for almost everywhere yields are very low'.

IN PRAISE OF WARWICK

Warwick is proud of its architectural tradition. 'It began', said PHILIP STYLES, in a Midland Home Service talk, 'as a fortress and it has always been most famous for its castle, probably the finest in England after Windsor. If you stand in the centre of the main street, looking up to St. Mary's Church, you will get some idea what this has meant to



Warwick, with the castle in the background

J. Allan Cash

its history. Behind you are the fourteenth-century castle towers, not aloof and remote, but very close indeed to the town, in fact a part of it until the grounds were walled in 150 years ago. To left and right you get that most striking view of the West Gate and the East Gate, still marking the limits of the medieval borough. There are some remains of the walls too, if you care to look for them, and you may wonder why so small a town as Warwick, far removed from any special danger from the sea, the Welsh or the Scots, should have been fortified at all. The answer lies in the feudal power of the great Beauchamp Earls of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, who rebuilt the castle and the gates and St. Mary's Church, where they are buried.

'But Warwick today is very largely a Queen Anne and Georgian town, and this—the other half of its distinctive tradition—is the result of the Great Fire of 1694. In the days of that and timber such calamities were common in English towns, but Warwick was specially fortunate in the quality of its rebuilding. Defoe, who saw the work soon after it was done, remarked that "few towns in England make so fine an appearance". Many of the houses which were still brand new when he saw them still give a friendly dignity to our streets, together with many others built later in the eighteenth century. Some of the finest of them, like Landor House, the birthplace of Walter Savage Landor, the poet, and now the Girls' High School, are very handsome indeed, with richly carved cornices, moulded doorways and ornamental ironwork. Others are small, ordinary town houses, with little decoration except perhaps a fanlight over the door; they depend for their effect mainly on that right spacing of doors and windows about which the Georgian builders could hardly go wrong. The

eighteenth century saw the erection of some fine public buildings too, such as the nave and tower of St. Mary's, the Shire Hall, the Court House and the castle bridge. St. Mary's tower was built after the fire by Sir Christopher Wren, and it is as fine a thing in its way as the Beauchamp Chapel. But nearly all the rest of the work was done by local men.

'DEMOCRACY' IN SEVILLE

KENNETH MATTHEWS, a B.B.C. special correspondent, lately visited the Seville Fair and gave some impressions of it in a Home Service talk. 'The young girls', he said, 'wore what children call party dresses, with skirts which swirled round and hid their feet. Their hair was held in place by combs which stood up behind their heads like a chair-back. They had red carnations in their hair, long red ear-rings, and castanets which clacked in their hands. They walked into the street as naturally as if they went out in this costume every midnight of their lives.'

Although, on first sight, the dress gives a most elaborate impression, it is made of the simplest material, generally red or blue spotted cotton from the Barcelona mills. The skirt is frilled out in a series of flounces, wider and wider towards the bottom, but (sensibly, in view of the dirt in the streets) not quite touching the ground. The purpose of the skirt is not only to surround the dancer with a wonderful spinning pattern



Spanish dancers, their dresses making 'a wonderful spinning pattern of colour'; and (below) girls going on horse-back to the Seville Fair

of colour, but also to provide some peacock's plumage for those who sit out. Not the smallest girl-child at the fair sits down without first solemnly fluffing out her skirt all round her. As for the girls who go to the fair on horseback or in carriages, they deck their skirts over the horse's cruppers or the carriage wheels and ride like flowers within their ring of petals; and if they go more modern-like by car, they sit on the front mudguards or even in the luggage-rack on the roof, so that they can find a space and a stage where they can properly display themselves.

'Spaniards assured me that this dress, with all its trimmings and accessories, could be made at home for 100 pesetas, which is less than the poorest worker's weekly wage; they added that no marriageable girl in Seville would hesitate to starve for a week to get her fair-time dress. During the next few days I saw these dresses in hundreds—I suppose in thousands—and I could well believe that it was the whole city on show.'

'The main area of the Fair was reserved for that peculiarly Spanish institution, the *casetas*. These are the three-walled rooms or dancing-floors which are first of all put up by the municipality and then hired out to anyone willing to pay the hiring fee. It costs about £5 to hire a small one for the four days of the fair, but the tenant has to decorate it and supply the entertainment for his guests, so that in the end it may cost

him a good deal of money. This year, the bigger *casetas* were taken by clubs or businesses. But over 200 were hired by private people for family parties. All of them had one characteristic in common; they were open to the public gaze. The apparent classlessness of the Seville Fair struck many visitors. The British Ambassador publicly commented on it. I heard an elderly Englishman enquiring in halting French whether the best families in Seville exhibited themselves in this way (he was incredulous, I think, rather than disapproving); and his host replied, with evident relish, that the Spanish were a highly democratic people, and how did he expect them to behave?'

MAKING A COLOUR FILM

PETER DONNE went recently to the laboratories on the outskirts of London where colour film is made. He said, reporting on his visit in 'The Eye-witness': 'A film does not arrive in the laboratories without a great deal of immensely painstaking work which starts in the studios. There the colour camera exposes three films at once, each registering different degrees of light. These negatives then go to the laboratories, a hive that hums and buzzes with whirling wheels. And over the wheels and down long covered paths, apparently endless strips of celluloid travel through white rooms walled with tidy racks, holding yards and yards of film. First of all there is a blank strip—blank that is, except for the sound-track at the side. Then there are the three master films. One of these passes through a tank of yellow dye and comes out yellow. The next is washed in blue-green—cyan as they call it. The third is bathed in magenta. Then all three are pressed together on the original sound-track blank—and the result is a colour film.'

The processed film now goes, as I did, downstairs to a row of viewing booths where a group of highly skilled people spend their days sitting in the darkness watching reel after reel gallop past them on the screen. The film is run much faster than in a cinema, and without sound, too; and there is no question of seeing a whole film. One moment it is a western, the next a musical, then perhaps a cartoon, then an entirely different western. The watchers have to spot variations in colour from one shot to the next—minute variations, which must be measured so that when necessary new and correct prints can be made. The guide to these differences is apparently grey. If your greys match you are all right. To do the job, you need three qualities: good taste, good feeling for colour values, and hard logic. In the third of these—say the experts—women fail . . . intuition is no substitute.

'It is not only full-length feature films these people have to inspect and pass, but very many different kinds of short film—advertising, educational, scientific, news. The record job in this last line was with the film of the Coronation in 1937 when the first copy was available for public screening within twenty-four hours of the event, and 120 export prints were through within three days.'



The New Society—I. The Historical Approach

The first of six broadcast lectures by E. H. CARR

TWENTY-FIVE years or so ago, when I was very young indeed and the world was not yet so uncomfortable a place as it has since become, I remember hearing a wise old gentleman remark that, in his opinion, the French revolution was a great mistake and that everything that had happened since had only made it worse. This view struck me then as novel and shocking. It has since become almost a commonplace; and, while I shall reserve for my last lecture my attempt to enquire whether the French revolution—together with its concomitant phenomena the American revolution and the industrial revolution, which my friend would certainly have included in the category of events that had better not have happened—was or was not the starting point of a process of decline, I shall assert here and now that it was, so far as anything ever has a starting point in history, the starting point of something, and that in order to understand the problems of the 'new society' in which we live today we shall have to go back at least as far as the French, the American and the industrial revolutions.

'History Conscious'

This assertion commits me to the historical approach to the contemporary world. The modern man is beyond all precedent 'history conscious'. What philosophy was to classical Greece and Rome, what theology was to the Middle Ages, what science was to the eighteenth century, that history is to our own time. The modern world is under no temptation to return to the monolithic aloofness of Thucydides, who opened his history of the Peloponnesian war with an expression of his belief that no great things had ever happened either in war or in peace before the events which he set out to describe, and evidently saw little reason to expect that any great things were likely to happen thereafter. The stoutest rationalist today finds cold comfort in the famous argument of Lucretius, the Roman sceptic: 'Consider how that past ages of eternal time before our birth were no concern of ours. This is a mirror which nature holds up to us of future time after our death'.

We have lost this capacity to isolate ourselves in time; we have become incorrigibly historical in our outlook. In the Middle Ages, it was the function of history to illustrate and justify God's ways to man: After the Renaissance, history got a new start out of the process of comparing the modern with the ancient world, which was held up as a model not since attained by a degenerate posterity: Gibbon's masterpiece was the highwatermark of this school: But it was left for the French revolution to enthrone history in her own right. Condorcet, while in prison awaiting the guillotine, rejected the consolations of religion in favour of those of history, and wrote *The Outline of a Table of Progress of the Human Spirit*, in which history was seen for the first time as a progressive advance towards a future utopia. Modern history begins when history becomes concerned with the future as well as with the past. Modern man peers eagerly back into the twilight out of which he has come, in the hope that its faint beams will illuminate the obscurity into which he is going; conversely his aspirations and anxieties about the path which lies before him sharpen his insight into what lies behind. No consciousness of the future, no history. In that nineteenth-century conglomeration of nations and potential nations, the Habsburg Empire, it was the so-called 'unhistorical peoples' who were unconcerned about their future; once they began to have aspirations for the future they discovered or invented histories of their past. Between past and future, action and interaction are constant. Past, present and future are woven together in an endless chain.

The birth of modern history was bound up with the belief that the path to knowledge is the discovery of certain laws and principles whose operation is exemplified in particular phenomena. This belief had its origin in the metaphysical rationalism of Descartes and the scientific rationalism of Newton. Its application to the processes of history began in France about 1750, when Montesquieu wrote in the preface to *L'Esprit des Lois*: 'I have set forth the principles, I have seen particular cases conform to them as of their own accord, I have seen

how the histories of all nations are nothing but their results'. In the nineteenth century, belief became general in a principle of progress, whose laws were exemplified in the events of history; the study of history was the key to an understanding of these laws. The laws of history were thus strictly analogous to the laws of science. After Darwin it was even thought that they were substantially the same laws: Darwin had proved that evolution proceeded through the struggle for existence, the elimination of the unfit and the survival of the fittest. It suddenly became obvious that these forces were also at work in the advance of mankind through history. Progress in history and progress in the natural world were different facets of the same process. As late as 1920 J. B. Bury, in the preface to his book *The Idea of Progress*, called progress 'the animating and controlling idea of western civilisation'.

Intellectual fashions change rapidly (which proves that intellectuals are also human); and, in the thirty years since Bury wrote these words, theories of progress in history have disappeared as completely as last year's snows. They have been replaced by theories of a natural process of decay inherent in all mature civilisations and manifested by western civilisation at the present time. In 1918 Oswald Spengler published in Germany his massive work which was translated into English a few years later under the title *The Decline of the West*. In 1934 Professor Arnold Toynbee began his still unfinished *Study of History*, of which six volumes were published in the nineteen-thirties. Side by side with these, though resting on a different hypothesis, may be placed the view propounded by Professor Butterfield in his broadcast lectures on *Christianity and History* in 1949. This view also represents a reaction against the theory of progress and has pessimistic implications. Here we are at the heart of our subject—the fundamental character of the changes of the past 150 years out of which the new society of today is emerging; and in order to clear the ground I should like to begin by joining issue on certain points with these three writers whom I have chosen as the outstanding representatives of a large and miscellaneous school.

Spengler's System

Spengler is the easiest; that is to say, he is always clear—perhaps clearer than any profound thinker has a right to be on so difficult a subject. Spengler believes in certain historical 'organisms' called civilisations obeying laws of causation which he calls destiny and which infallibly determine their cause. Spengler's system is a powerful and consistent construction which cannot be refuted within the limit of its presuppositions. It can be rejected only by denying Spengler's initial belief in the existence of civilisations as objective entities, obeying fixed laws of development and decay. Since no important thinker, at any rate outside Germany, now accepts this belief, I need spend no more time on Spengler. But he deserves a place in the record as the first begetter of the fashionable current thesis of historical decadence.

From Spengler's heady, intoxicating, enervating brew one turns with relief to Toynbee's long, cool, sparkling drink of Spengler-and-splash. In *A Study of History* Toynbee takes over Spengler's general conclusions about the course of civilisations in general and of contemporary western civilisation in particular, but tries to reach them by less Germanic paths. He stems from the English empirical tradition, and refers to what he calls on one occasion 'our trusty and well-beloved method of making an empirical survey'. This presumably means that he seeks to establish the laws of behaviour of civilisations by studying how they in fact behave; and this would be legitimate enough if he shared Spengler's view of civilisations as objective entities or organisms. But this view he explicitly abandons. For Toynbee, so far as can be judged from what he has published up to the present, civilisations are merely the name for bundles of phenomena which the historian finds it convenient to lump together; and a subjective definition of this kind, which would be perfectly satisfactory from my point of view, seems fatal to any attempt—such as I understand Toynbee to be making—to discover laws of behaviour of civilisations. Spengler's conclusions follow logically from

unsound premises. Toynbee's premises, however sound in themselves, fail to support either his main Spenglerian edifices or the sparkling cascade of historical generalisations which come so trippingly from his pen. My difference with Toynbee is that he regards history as repetitive, whereas I think of it as continuous. For him history consists of the same things happening over and over again with minor variations in different contexts; for me history is a procession of events about which almost the only thing that can be said with certainty is that it moves constantly on and never returns to the same place. And this difference naturally affects one's view of the lessons that history can teach.

Professor Toynbee's View

The difference turns on fundamental conceptions of the nature of history. Toynbee's view, like Spengler's, rests on the analogy between history and science in which historical thought has been enmeshed for nearly two centuries. The analogy is false. In science the drama repeats itself over and over again because the *dramatis personae* are creatures unconscious of the past or inanimate objects. In history the drama cannot repeat itself because the *dramatis personae* at the second performance are already conscious of the prospective *dénouement*; the essential condition of the first performance can never be reconstituted. Between the two world wars a well-known military critic, having studied the conditions of land warfare between 1914 and 1918 and decided that these conditions still held, predicted that in the next war the defensive would once more triumph over the offensive. His objective reasoning may have been perfectly correct. But he omitted one factor. The German generals were determined not to repeat the unfortunate *dénouement* of 1918 at the second performance. They were thus enabled to introduce new elements into the chain of causation and to produce in 1940 directly opposite results to those predicted. Human consciousness of the past prevents history from repeating itself.

Before the middle of the nineteenth century so-called bourgeois revolutions had put the middle class into power in most countries of western Europe. One result of this was a rapid expansion of the ruling middle class, and, as a result, an equally rapid expansion of the proletariat, so that Marx was emboldened to predict a proletarian revolution as the natural corollary of the bourgeois revolution. But, once this sequence of events had penetrated human consciousness, history could not repeat itself. The German middle class was by this time so frightened of the potential *dénouement* that it refused to perform the drama of the bourgeois revolution in Germany and preferred to come to terms with Bismarck. In history the presumption is not that the same thing will happen again, but that the same thing will not happen again. All analogies between history and science, all cyclical theories of history, are tainted with the fundamental error of neglecting human consciousness of the past. You cannot look forward intelligently into the future unless you also are prepared to look back attentively into the past. But this does not mean that you will find there either laws to obey or precedents to guide you. If I am deeply concerned in these lectures with the history of the last 150 years, this is not because I expect anything that happened then to happen again (this is the kind of lesson which history does not teach), but because history deals with a line or procession of events, half of which lies in the past and half in the future, and you cannot have an intelligent appreciation of one half unless you also concern yourself with the other half.

Butterfield has reacted just as strongly as Spengler and Toynbee from the doctrine of progress in history, and with more far-reaching results. Spengler and Toynbee take the doctrine of progress in the form in which it had been held at the end of the nineteenth century, metaphysically in Germany, empirically in Britain, and turn it without much effort and without much fundamental change into a doctrine of decline. Butterfield jumps over the nineteenth century and the Age of the Enlightenment and lands us right back into providential history. (It seems to me fairer to call it the providential rather than the Christian view of history; for, just as most Christians today would not believe in the intervention of God to alter the courses of the stars, so many Christians would not believe in the intervention of God in the course of history.) Butterfield is not unwilling, like Acton before him, to identify nineteenth-century progress with the hand of providence. But the present age appears to him rather as the age of judgment in history. 'The hardest strokes of heaven in history', he writes, 'fall on those who imagine that they can control things in a sovereign manner, as though they were kings of the earth playing providence not only for themselves, but for the far future'; and this goes not only for the Napoleons and the Hitlers but for makers of the League of Nations

and such-like panacea-mongers who think to build a heaven on earth.

But on this I would venture two remarks. In the first place, I do not know why judgment in history, which fell so heavily on Napoleon and which has fallen so heavily on recent sinners, fell so lightly on those who committed similar sins between 1815 and 1914. Secondly, while these things cannot really be measured, I should have thought that the hardest stroke of all in recent history fell on the 6,000,000 or 8,000,000 Jews who were exterminated in the camps and in the gas-chambers; and, if I am told that this was not a stroke of judgment, but a case of unmerited suffering, then I find this conception of strokes of heaven in history still more difficult. It seems to me that belief in the intervention of providence in historical events is as hard to reconcile with serious history as belief in intervention in the movements of the stars would be with serious astronomy. History in the modern sense came into being precisely when belief in providential intervention was discarded.

This brings me to another red herring which both Toynbee and Butterfield seem to me to have dragged across the path. Both write eloquently on the theme of human wickedness. Butterfield is particularly anxious that nobody should think too well of human nature, and has some pertinent and penetrating comments on the admixture of evil in most seemingly good human actions. It would not occur to me to deny that human beings are often very wicked. Evil as well as good is of the stuff of almost everything that men do, and especially, perhaps, of everything that they do in their capacity as political animals. But this does not help us here. Our problem is to discover why, between 1815 and 1914, men succeeded in conducting their political affairs with a reasonable show of decency and without large-scale mutual destruction, and why, since 1914, hatred, intolerance, cruelty and mutual extermination have once more become the staple of political action over a large part of the world. It seems to me contrary to anything we know or anything that is plausible to suppose that individual men and women today are more wicked or specifically more cruel or more aggressive than they were a hundred years ago. If they are not, we must clearly look for some different explanation of what has happened in the last forty years. Let me use an illustration suggested by Marc Bloch's admirable but unfinished *Apologie pour l'histoire*. Scientists say that there can be no fire without oxygen in the air. When my house burns down, I shall call on Professors Toynbee and Butterfield to investigate the cause, and they will explain that the fire was due to the presence of oxygen in the air. The explanation will be cogent and correct, but will not satisfy the fire assessor. The attribution of recent calamities to human wickedness equally fails to satisfy the historian.

'Facts of History'

The views which I have so far discussed all postulate the existence of objective facts of history, broadly corresponding to the objective data of science. Even Butterfield, who knows that we all approach history with our own presuppositions, still speaks of 'what can be established by concrete external evidence' and of 'things which must be valid whether one is a Jesuit or a Marxist'. Such facts do undoubtedly exist: the exact date and place of William the Conqueror's landing in England; the number and fire-power of the ships that fought at Trafalgar or at Jutland; the statistics of population or industry or trade for a given country at a given period. These things have the same relation to history as bricks or steel or concrete have to architecture. They are facts which need to be established, tested, and verified; the historian must not be caught out using shoddy material. But they are not in themselves 'facts of history'. It is only the decision of the historian to use them, the conviction of the historian that they are significant for his purpose, which makes them into the 'facts of history'. That the Jesuit and the Marxist historian should agree about certain facts is of small importance. What matters is their agreement or disagreement on the questions which facts are significant, which facts are the 'facts of history'. 'The facts of history', says the American writer Carl Becker, 'do not exist for any historian until he creates them'. His choice and arrangement of these facts, and the juxtapositions of them which indicate his view of cause and effect, must be dictated by presuppositions; and these presuppositions, whether he is conscious of them or not, will be closely related to the conclusion which he is seeking to establish. The Christian historian of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire will select different facts, and arrange them in a different way, from the historian who seeks to establish an equation between barbarism and religion. The historian who believes in the primacy of the economic factor will isolate as significant a commercial or financial transaction

which, for another historian, may be as irrelevant to history as a street accident. The notion that it is possible to determine the nature of the historical process through a study of the 'facts of history' is tainted with this unavoidable vice of circularity. The facts of history come into being simultaneously with your diagnosis of the historical process and as an intrinsic part of it. They cannot precede it as independent entities.

Dialogue between Past and Present

History is therefore a process of interaction between the historian and the past of which he is writing. The facts help to mould the mind of the historian. But the mind of the historian also, and just as essentially, helps to mould the facts. History is a dialogue between past and present, not between dead past and living present, but between living present and a past which the historian makes live again by establishing its continuity with the present; and, among recent writers on the subject, I find myself most indebted to Collingwood, who has insisted most strongly on this continuity and on this process of interaction. It is an old trouble that the word 'history', which by its derivation and in its proper use signifies the enquiry conducted by the historian, should have been transferred by popular usage to the material in which he works—the series of events themselves; for this transferred usage encourages the fallacy that history is something that exists outside the mind of the historian and independently of it. This popular usage has also encouraged confusion of thought about the so-called 'pattern' in history. Needless to say, I should reject absolutely the conception once put forward by H. A. L. Fisher (and tacitly held, I suspect, by some other modern historians) of a 'patternless' history, that is to say of history as an inconsequential narration having no coherence and therefore no meaning for the present. But this does not commit me to the view of a pattern inherent in the events themselves—the view of Spengler and Toynbee; or of a pattern woven by an inscrutable providence—the view of Butterfield. For me the pattern in history is what is put there by the historian. History is itself the pattern into which the historian weaves his material; without pattern there can be no history. Pattern can only be the product of mind—the mind of the historian working on the events of the past.

The view that the pattern of history takes shape in the brain of the historian, and is fashioned not only by the events he is describing but also by the world in which he is living, is supported by an overwhelming weight of experience; and although professional historians still sometimes put forward unguarded professions of objectivity, the 'conditioned' character of all historical writing has now become almost a commonplace. Creators of historical systems are not exempt from this rule. The idea of progress which inspired nineteenth-century systems and the idea of cyclical movement and decline which inspires more recent systems have been transparently derived not so much from a dispassionate analysis of the past as from the emotional impact of the current situation. Even in detail those systems reflect the particular bias of those who construct them. Hegel found the culmination of the historical process in the Prussian State, Spencer in the free trade, free competition and free contract of mid-Victorian England. Spengler owed the immense popularity of his work to the occasion which it provided for his compatriots to treat the downfall of Germany in 1928 as an integral part of the predestined 'decline of the west'.

The deepening pessimism about the future of western civilisation which marks successive volumes of Professor Toynbee's *Study of History* reflects the increasing solicitude of the nineteen-thirties about the weaknesses and failures of British policy. Articulate human groups share a natural human inclination to attach universal significance to their own experiences. The pattern is not inherent in the events themselves; it is imposed upon them out of the consciousness and experience of the historian. The pattern is, however, determined not so much by the historian's view of the present, as by his view of the future. Past and future are the two essential time dimensions; the present is an infinitesimally small moving point on a continuous line consisting of past and future. It is thus the future prospect even more than the present reality which shapes the historian's view of the past. Macaulay and his nineteenth-century successors were influenced not so much by their satisfaction with what they saw around them as by their conviction that things would be even better in the future. Current theories of decline in history are prompted not so much by contemplation of our present difficulties as by the belief that things are going from bad to worse. It is the sense of direction which counts.

Moreover this insistence on the future as the criterion of judgment on

the past is perfectly logical. There is point in the story of the Chinese historian who, when asked what he thought about the French revolution, replied that no serious historian could yet be expected to have an opinion about so recent an event. Macaulay regarded the nineteenth century as a century of progress, Spengler and Toynbee as a century of decay. Even if we are content with a common-sense general view of progress and do not attempt a precise definition, we have today frankly no means of deciding which view is right. Will our posterity judge the nineteenth century as the beginning of a great new period of human achievement or as the beginning of the end of our civilisation? We do not know what to think about the nineteenth century for the simple reason that the history of the twentieth century is still in the making. The historian of A.D. 2000 will be in a better case to pronounce judgment. But need we accept even his verdict—especially as it may easily be reversed by the historian of A.D. 2500? In modern times the shape of Roman history has changed almost from generation to generation. Gibbon found his hero in Marcus Aurelius, a philosopher-king. The age of the French revolution, which hated tyrants and liked rhetoric, saw in Cato and Brutus the pinnacles of Roman greatness; the later nineteenth century, which had discovered the survival of the fittest, preferred Caesar; a more recent epoch, keenly alive to the problems of planning and large-scale organisation, has discerned the merits of Augustus.

The question when the decline of Roman civilisation began—quite apart from the more exciting question why—is still undecided by history. Two thousand years hence the final verdict on the nineteenth century may still be as uncertain as it is today. The historian is like an observer watching a moving procession from an aeroplane; since there is no constant or ascertainable relation between the speed, height and direction of the aircraft and the movement of the procession, changing and unfamiliar perspectives are juxtaposed in rapid succession, as in a cubist picture, none of them wholly false, none wholly true. Any static view of history purporting to be recorded from a fixed point by a stationary observer is fallacious.

Let me sum up, in the light of these reflections, what I mean by the historical approach and how I think it applicable to the problems which we have to face. History seeks to link the past with the future in a continuous line along which the historian himself is constantly moving. It is clear that we should not expect to extract from history any absolute judgments, either on the past or on the future. Such judgments it is not in its nature to give. All human judgment, like all human action, is involved in the logical dilemma of determinism and free will. The human being is indissolubly bound, in both his actions and his judgments, by a chain of causation reaching far back into the past; yet he has a qualified power to break the chain at a given point—the present—and so alter the future. In common-sense language, he can decide and judge for himself, but only up to a certain point; for the past limits and determines his decision and his judgment in innumerable ways. To admit that our judgments are wholly and irrevocably conditioned is to plead moral and intellectual bankruptcy. But to recognise the conditioned element in them is the best way to put us on our guard against too readily yielding to intellectual fictions—of which the nineteenth-century belief in progress and the twentieth-century belief in decadence are excellent examples.

Intellectual Treason

It is, of course, possible that this country, or western Europe, or what we call the western world, may be doomed to perish in the near future in some sudden cataclysm from within or from without. But to accept this possibility as inevitable would be, in a famous phrase, 'the treason of the intellectuals'. Certainly history can reveal no predetermined pattern which decides that a 'nation' or a 'civilisation', having passed through a cycle of achievement, should at a given stage wilt and perish. Nor does history provide any warrant for assuming the existence of a single entity called 'western civilisation' whose destiny will follow everywhere the same uniform course. If some groups or nations within the orbit of western civilisation today are destined to decline, others of them may still provide pioneers having the energy and capacity to carry them forward along the road of fresh achievement; at any rate there is nothing in history to prove that they cannot. Grandiose pronouncements of the judgment of history on civilisations or nations sometimes provide evidence only of the bankruptcy of the groups from which they emanate.

This backward-looking view which makes us the helpless victims of the past is one of the gravest symptoms of our present crisis. The danger which confronts us was stated more than a hundred years ago

by Alexis de Tocqueville in the preface to his *Democracy in America*:

The Christian nations of our age seem to me to present a most alarming spectacle; the impulse which is bearing them along is so strong that it cannot be stopped, but it is not yet so rapid that it cannot be guided; their fate is in their hands; yet a little while and it may be so no longer. The first duty which is at this time imposed upon those who direct our affairs is to educate the democracy; to warm its faith, if that be possible; to purify its morals; to direct its energies, to substitute a knowledge of business for its inexperience, and an acquaintance with its true interests for its blind propensities; to adapt its government to time and place, and to modify it in compliance with the occurrences and the actors of the age. A new science of politics is indispensable to a new world: This, however, is what we think of least; launched in the middle of a rapid stream, we obstinately fix our eyes on the ruins which may still be descried upon the shore we have left, while the current sweeps us along, and drives us backward toward the gulf.

These words might serve as a motto to the present series of lectures, in the course of which I shall be in a constant state of war with those whose eyes are fixed nostalgically on the ruins that lie behind rather than on the prospect of the shore towards which we are travelling; and one insidious contemporary form of this nostalgia is the profession of a so-called 'neutrality' of the intellectuals, the famous ivory tower whose peculiar characteristic is that all its windows open on to the ruins of the past. Professor Oakeshott, in his recent inaugural lecture on political education, described the world of politics as 'a boundless and bottomless sea' offering 'neither harbour for shelter nor floor for anchorage, neither starting-place nor appointed destination', and the only task proposed for political man was 'to keep afloat with an even keel'. To keep afloat without knowing or, apparently, caring about one's port of destination seems to represent altogether too low a view of human endeavour; nor, except perhaps in moments of desperate and mortal crisis, is it an accurate picture of how human beings actually behave. Human efforts may sometimes be feeble, and human ambitions sometimes exaggerated. But it is unwise to decry them altogether. They are the stuff of which human achievement is made; and at the present time we suffer from too few, rather than from too many, ambitions.

Here, however, the intellectual Christian stands on the same ground with the intellectual sceptic. 'Hold to Christ', says Butterfield in the concluding sentence of his book, 'and for the rest be totally uncommitted'. And Oakeshott's view, if I understand it rightly, might be summarised in the same formula with the change of a single word: 'Hold to tradition, and for the rest be totally uncommitted'. But intellectuals cannot and should not remain 'totally uncommitted' in our current predicament. Nor do they in fact remain uncommitted. 'To run down philosophy', wrote Pascal, 'is really to philosophise'. To denounce ideologies in general is to set up an ideology of one's own. Professions of neutrality and non-commitment are tantamount to a rejection of that 'new science of politics' which Tocqueville saw to be

'indispensable to a new world'; those who make these professions bury their heads, not in the sand, but in the graveyard of dead ideologies.

If, however, we resist the temptations of determinism and of scepticism, we must be cautious about yielding too readily to the blandishments of Utopia. Utopianism means a rejection of the past. It denies the validity of history, substituting for it an indulgence in wish-dreams about what might have happened if only George III had not lost the American colonies, if only the internal combustion engine or the atom bomb had not been invented, if only Kerensky had beaten the Bolsheviks in 1917—the sort of speculation that belongs not to serious history, but to the competitions column of the weeklies. In its visions of the future, it constructs imaginary commonwealths having no lineal or causal connection with the past, and therefore unrealisable. The sane student of history must reject these wish-dreams, these speculations, these castles in the air, even at the risk of being branded as a determinist. If somebody who believes that monarchy is the best possible form of government tells me that he proposes to start a campaign for the restoration of monarchy in the United States, I shall tell him that he is wasting his time, since the history of the last 150 years is against him. But that does not make me a determinist. The function of the historian is not to reshape or reform the past, but to accept it and to analyse what he finds significant in it, to isolate and illuminate the fundamental changes at work in the society in which we live and the perhaps age-old processes which lie behind them; and this will entail a view (which, since it will be present even if it is unconscious, had much better be consciously recognised and deliberately avowed) of the processes by which the problems set to the present generation by these changes can be resolved.

The historian undertakes a twofold operation: to analyse the past in the light of the present and the future which is growing out of it, and to cast the beam of the past over the issues which dominate present and future. His aims and purposes will ultimately be derived from values which have their source outside history; for without these history itself must become meaningless—a mere succession of action for the sake of action, and change for the sake of change. But the translation of these values into terms of policy is historically conditioned and subject to all the imperfections of the historical process; and the application of policy to a particular historical situation is also closely involved in the understanding and acceptance of that situation. Well-meaning reformers who propound utopian solutions of political problems commonly fail to recognise how far self-interest has intruded into the formulation of their ideal in terms of policy, and how complicated are the historical issues involved in its application. A historically minded generation is one which looks back, not indeed for solutions which cannot be found in the past, but for those critical insights which are necessary both to the understanding of its existing situation and to the realisation of the values which it holds.—*Third Programme*

Post-war Housing in London

By OLIVER COX

THE dreary ugliness of the pre-war 'working-class housing estate' in London is often, I feel, the reflection of a dreary outlook on the part of the people who put them up. They seem to have been more interested in the dry bones of regulations and by-laws than in the live material of the tenants' needs and emotions. But I believe that since the war one of the cheering things about our development has been the improvement in the standard of housing. One seldom hears the term 'working-class housing' any more. The reason is that the desperate need for homes has widened the range covered by the local authorities till they virtually control all large-scale housing development. Then, the almost complete absence of private jobs has forced some of our most gifted architects into the housing field, both as private architects employed by the authorities, and as salaried employees; and at last some of the regulations and restrictions are being called in question, or—better—being interpreted with imagination.

I am going to discuss some of the different kinds of post-war housing, types that you can see in many parts of the country; but if

we want to form some opinion of what has been achieved we must examine not only the new ideas which are emerging but also the framework of controls within which the architect now has to work. Consequently as these vary a bit throughout the country I shall refer particularly to schemes in and around London where they are fairly stringent.

Although there are more controls now than before the war, I do not think this has necessarily made the architect's job more difficult. Since 1943 all schemes for development have had to be submitted to local authorities for planning approval. In London the County of London plan, which followed soon after, has laid down the areas to which housing should be confined and the population density for each area. So at last these essential factors have been taken from the hands of the private speculator and given to the housing architect as part of a clear and deliberate brief. At last he knows what his buildings must contain and what is planned to go on around them. These density regulations are the most important conditioning factor in post-war housing. The London plan allows for 200 persons to the acre for the

central area, 136 to the acre for the middle belt, and 100 for the outer areas. This means that at the 200 density your housing has to be in large blocks of flats, they must be as high as possible, and with a very restricted amount of open space in between. There are no two ways about it. These large blocks are not the result of an architect's whim, or a speculator's desire for profit; they are a direct result of the planned attempt to provide every Londoner with a home of his own, without ejecting a large proportion of London's population. At

out at the other end a block of flats something like this: five or six storeys high with access galleries 160 feet long on one side served by one stair and lift. This type of block is, heaven knows, familiar enough in London; its official title is the 'gallery access' type. Because it is probably the cheapest solution, almost every bit of development in high density areas shows it in some form or another. These access galleries, necessarily in long straight runs, are pretty bleak and 'institutional'. Tenants do not get much privacy, particularly if the bedroom windows give on to the gallery. Worst of all, it forces on the block a marked front and back side—as inviting to architectural primness on the front as it is to rudeness on the back. How has this much-abused gallery access type been handled in some of the post-war schemes?

Near King's Cross, at Busaco Street, the firm of Tecton have boldly emphasised the long horizontals of their galleries by facing the gallery fronts with white concrete slabs and painting the walls behind black. There is a virtue in boldness and from certain views this treatment is dramatic; but I do not know that the tenant's long journey along the gallery to his front door is made any less tedious by being flanked with a pitch-black wall. On the other facade of this building, again, the individual elements such as the balconies and living-room windows are treated as units in a huge and bold pattern in which the people and curtains and washing and so on seem to have as much place as ants on a chess-board. Not far from here, at King's Cross, Cromer Street, quite the opposite line has been taken by Henning and Chitty; they have given their gallery fronts thin metal railings and have painted the thin edge of the gallery white, trying to give as light a feeling as possible. The attempt is partly frustrated, in my opinion, because the blocks have had to be arranged in parallel rows, with two galleries facing each other across the asphalt of a play-court; the lightness of detail is contradicted by this rather grim arrangement, which one so readily associates with the old tenement blocks.

At St. Pancras Way, with a slightly lower density, there is another interesting gallery access scheme by Norman and Dawbarn. The architects here have managed to avoid these close parallel blocks, with their enclosed courts alternately tidy and untidy. The blocks are indeed still parallel, but are of varying lengths and distances apart, so that the



Flats at St. Pancras Way, with gallery access. Architects: Norman and Dawbarn

the lower density levels it is possible for the architect to choose a more intimate scale of low blocks closely related together or a more open and spacious arrangement with big blocks far apart, providing room for allotments, games, trees, grass and so on.

Apart from density controls, there is cost. The local authorities have since the beginning of the century received a subsidy from the Government for housing, and the scales were last revised in 1949. The present subsidy is based on the type of building, the density and the cost of the site, and it is slightly more favourable to the erection of flats than of houses. As the Exchequer contribution is three times that of the local authority, the type of development may be very much affected. And what is more, as the amounts of these subsidies have been based on considerable experience of traditional building costs, they provide a pretty low price ceiling, which means that experiment with new techniques of building is a risky business since potentially cheap methods often cost a lot to get started.

By-laws and fire regulations have not changed much since the war, but they have for some years been becoming architecturally more apparent since economy has forced the shapes of the blocks nearer and nearer the moulds set by these regulations. Firemen's rescue ladders have got no longer—so building still stops at 100 feet in height. Free access to the building for these ladders may affect the layout, and the maximum distance of eighty feet between the door of your flat and the communal escape stair may condition the length of the block. In fact it is almost true to say that if you put all the conditions and regulations into some fabulous calculating machine you would get



Priory Court, Countess Road, Walthamstow, with staircase access. Designed by F. G. Southgate, architect to the Borough Council

scheme has a pleasant informality. Attractive balcony railings of a light steel mesh are robust without being clumsy and they do not stand out aggressively against the light stock brickwork. In fact these architects have not found it necessary for the block in front to present a rude posterior to its fellow. The main elevation is again simple, with balconies picked out in colour and not disciplined into a formal pattern; of the three schemes I have mentioned, this is the only one in which a variety of different sized flats have been combined in the same block—a thing which is very difficult to do if the elevation is formalised.

Advantages of Staircase Access

The great rival to gallery access is staircase access, the flats grouped in pairs about a staircase. Although a little more expensive than gallery access—considerably so if a lift is used as well—it has many advantages: the staircase delivers you straight into the heart of the flat, whereas from a gallery it is necessary to provide a corridor within the flat itself to get you there. More different plan types are possible since you have now two external walls—neither of them overlooked—and you are no longer faced with the difficulty of the backside of the block. On the other hand, because the flats logically would be mirrored in plan about the staircase, you may get an unfortunate elevation, one which appears to squint; and the handling of the vertical staircase slit is architecturally difficult too. Tecton in their Finsbury scheme have avoided the staircase slit by providing a little pattern of holes in the brickwork at each landing level. This is a rather medieval way of lighting the stair and the suppression of the staircase as an element in the elevation has been carried, I think, a little too far. All the flats here are the same size and are mirrored about the staircase, so one would expect a simple elevation to follow naturally; the most marked characteristic of this facade, however, is the pattern caused by alternating the positions of solid and open balcony fronts, which is not related to any internal requirements.

A scheme which is admirable for its clarity of expression is at Countess Road, Walthamstow, designed by F. G. Southgate, architect to the Borough Council. Staircase access again, the blocks are six storeys high with the ground floor of each used for laundry, pram stores, workshops and open drying spaces, architecturally expressed as units behind the supporting columns. The density is low—ninety-five to the acre—so the blocks are well spaced apart. Since there are no outbuildings and the blocks have sober and carefully considered elevations on both sides, the scheme as a whole has a generous and composed air. The balconies are in continual use because kitchens as well as living-rooms give on to them, but the wisps of washing and so on that garnish them do not seem to matter because the balconies look as though they are designed to be used, and are not just for architectural relief. The window grouping in particular is pleasantly simple; this is made easy because each block consists of the same size of flat.

But certainly the most brilliant handling of massive flat blocks is that by Powell and Moya at Pimlico. The blocks here are a tremendous height and are relieved on the bedroom side by glass-sided staircases which project out from the block. The stairs serve short private access balconies which are brightly painted and give the building a lively sparkle. The plan that results from this combination of staircase with private access balcony does however suffer from the drawbacks of both types: you have to pay for a lift to serve every two flats, and your flat plan is not as clean as it might be because the approach is from the outside rather than the middle. But for honesty of expression and care in detail there is a lot to be learned from these flats. Here, one feels, imagination is based on common sense rather than on a poetic seizure.

Danger of 'Parallel Slabs'

With both staircase and gallery blocks, however, there is always a tendency, particularly in high density areas, for lay-outs to degenerate into long rows of parallel slabs, which makes any interesting handling of the site or expression of a human scale very difficult. There is an alternative provided by the tower type of block, eight or ten storeys high with maybe three or four flats on each floor—on the continent they call these 'point-blocks'. This type is the most economical in site space and it frees more ground in the precincts than any other type. Most of the continental schemes have a central stair and internal bathrooms and thus get an extremely compact plan and trim facade; but in London, fire regulations require staircases to be naturally lit

and ventilated and for high blocks there must be two of them. This adds considerably to the size of the building and unless the size of the flats themselves is kept down the block becomes ponderous. Harlow New Town has one of the first of these blocks, designed by Frederick Gibberd. It is ten storeys high with four one-room flats per floor; it is a very interesting experiment indeed and I hope it will have a following. But in my opinion it is marred by the clamouring of each pair of northerly flats for a fair share of sunlight—understandable of course, but it has contorted the plan and complicated the facade, and contrasting colours of external brickwork rather add to the confusion. Sir Thomas Bennett at Highgate North Hill has put up three seven-storey point-blocks of cruciform plan, and although the neo-Georgian windows seem very inappropriate the blocks are well sited; there is a refreshing sense of the site flowing in between and around them.

Of flat blocks generally one can say the smaller the individual unit the simpler and more direct the plan and the architectural expression. Large flats are very hard to manage, and in any case large families who need them should have first claim to be near the ground and provided with a private garden. There is a tendency therefore to try to accommodate these larger families in houses, or else in maisonette blocks. Maisonette blocks are usually in slabs of four or six storeys with access galleries on alternate floors, serving the lower floor of each maisonette; and since they occur only at alternate floors these galleries may not be so dominating as those in flat blocks. In fact the different use of the alternate floors in a maisonette block can give variety and architectural character to both elevations. There is a good example by Edward Mills, in a small four-storey block at Hackney. The living-room and balcony, which occupy the whole width of the maisonette are expressed as one unit, the living-room window recessed behind a flower-box. Unfortunately, the back elevation is less good, with the projecting access gallery looking rather lost and forlorn. At Pimlico, maisonettes are superimposed over two floors of one-room flats, making four floors in all with access galleries serving the lower three. This has been very simply expressed on elevation and it makes a pleasant block. It might seem socially upside down, with the largest families farthest from the ground, but this is justified by reserving the lower flats for old people.

Mixed Development

Mainly for density reasons schemes combining houses and flats have been very rare. The tendency has been towards the concentration of large flat blocks in central areas and so-called 'cottage estates' outside. It is a great pity because mixed development is sociologically much better and architecturally more interesting. And it is possible, at densities of 100 or even 136 an acre, to introduce short terraces of two- or three-storey houses. This would give a much more intimate scale and a welcome relief from the high blocks and wide spaces. I think the outstanding example of mixed development is at Hackney—Frederick Gibberd again—who has grouped three-storey flats, two-storey flats and terrace houses and single-storey terrace houses round a series of closes. The relation of size and height of block has been very carefully studied and the result is human and delightful. If only more architects would concentrate, as Gibberd has here, on the relation between one building and another and on the spaces they enclose—and leave the elevations alone for a bit. After all, we live in the spaces as well as the buildings.

All the schemes I have mentioned are conspicuous for the care and thought that have gone into them. Mistakes have been made, of course, but the only serious failures are those where the architects have forgotten that a really complete building is one in occupation, in which all the untidy and personal things which are natural for its inhabitants to do are not in conflict with the architectural conception, but are helping to fulfil it. I hope I may have shown that in spite of regulations and cost ceilings, experiment into new types of plan and methods of construction is slowly going on. This work needs as much attention—and criticism—as we can give it, because upon its success depends whether our new buildings are to be lively and pleasant places to live in or whether they will continue to be the products of economy and of the by-laws.—*Third Programme*

The May number of *The Geographical Magazine* (price 2s.) contains articles by Geoffrey Grigson on 'Literature and the Dorset Landscape'; by William M. Clyde on 'The Rice Problem in Eastern Asia', and by Fitzroy Maclean on 'Yugoslavia: the Land and the People' (both articles illustrated in colour); and by Tom Harrison on 'The Kelsbits of Borneo'. A map of Britain is also included (obtainable separately, price 2s. 6d.) showing what people talk about in various parts of the country.

The Decline of the Imagination

By EDWIN MUIR

I FEEL that the title of this talk is slightly ambiguous, but I could not think of any other that would be less so. I should begin by saying that I have no evidence that there has been an absolute decline of the imagination. It may be as powerful now and as widely exercised as it was in the Elizabethan age. What I am quite persuaded is that, if it has not declined absolutely, it has in any case declined relatively to other human powers, and particularly to analytical thought and science, whose influence has increased so greatly in the last hundred years, and particularly in the last fifty. We are all troubled by the increasing dominance of science; it has become a public question; and what I shall be talking about here is what everybody, when he has a moment to spare for his own problems or the world's, so often talks about. I mean the feeling that science has run on far ahead, and that we have not gained the wisdom to use for our good the enormous power which in passing it drops into our hands. As we do not know what to do with this power, it becomes a dangerous possession, an explosive possibility. This feeling was startlingly expressed by Gabriel Marcel some time ago when he said that for the first time in history it is possible for the human race now to commit suicide. I fancy that in saying this he was expressing a general fear, not describing an actual situation, and I have quoted him not because I believe what he says is true, but because it expresses very strikingly our sense of the danger into which we feel we have run.

How the World Changes

It is the world based on scientific knowledge, or rather made possible by it, that we fear; not science, not knowledge. It is an actual world, that is to say, not a body of truth. In the far slower development of past civilisations, perhaps the succeeding generations too had their fears, though far less acute than ours, and found it difficult to adapt themselves to some new invention, such as the use of iron instead of stone, or the discovery of agriculture, or the construction of cities with all the organisation of transport and differentiation of trades requisite for a city life, or the consolidation of states and the management of their relations with one another. The world in which mankind lives has been changing ever since we have had any knowledge of it. But the change in these past times was different both in speed and in quality from change as we have known it in the modern world. For the early changes, though no doubt experimental in a rough and ready way, were not based on strict scientific method. The incipient blacksmith saw a possibility in metal and set himself to discover whether he could bring it out; the future farmer, observing the behaviour of nature, tried to help it on by planting seed in the soft uncovered soil, and later invented the plough. For long ages change in the actual world of mankind was brought about by means such as these.

But the great changes in the modern world have been precipitated by other—by strictly scientific—means; by an analysis, conducted under the requisite conditions, of the stuff out of which organic and inorganic being is made. And the world evoked by such means is in its turn different in quality from the pre-scientific world. The older world was much more in accordance with nature as nature works left to itself, or with a little encouragement. The cornfields and pasture lands of the north, the terraced vineyards and olive groves of the south, even the palaces and churches in the cities could still pass as adaptations or embellishments of nature. All this is gone. The world has changed radically as a place for human beings to live in, and has become the blundering, sometimes frightening, embodiment of an increasingly perfect intellectual process: the visible creation of science; or perhaps more truly a distortion of science, the misbegotten offspring of a union between science in its purity and the ordinary ignorant unregenerate insatiable natural man. Man once lived in the world and made what improvements he could on it for his comfort. In our age he has created a world of his own. That is the world in which he now lives.

The transformation of the appearance, the substantial feeling, the sensuous ambience of the world—for instance, in large cities—must

have had a great influence on us, for our thoughts and sentiments attach themselves to what we see, feel, hear and touch. But just as great is the effect upon us of the way of thinking which produced that change and goes on producing it. As our world was made possible by analytical thought and a scientific approach to things, we inherit that disposition often without being aware of it, and look on nature and on human life with a different eye from our fathers. We too have grown analytical in our thinking: all of us, not merely the intellectuals and the scientists. Our language has grown abstract; one has only to compare it with the language of the sixteenth or seventeenth century to see the difference. Our newspapers, whether expensive or popular, are written in an English which would have appeared strange and almost incomprehensible 300 years ago. The very news is conveyed to us as abstractly as possible. And this, I think (and here I come to my main argument) is because in the last few centuries the balance between the imagination and the analytical intellect has been lost. Science has made such enormous progress that all of us, a few expertly, a multitude ignorantly, think in terms of it, and in terms of it first; so that the use of the imagination no longer comes naturally to us; it is sometimes only an afterthought, or a comment on a theme already announced with greater authority elsewhere.

By the imagination I mean that power by which we try to apprehend living things in their individuality, not as categories, and as they live and move, not as objects arrested for methodical study. In this it is quite different from analytical experiment, which immobilises and isolates things in order to discover the constituents of which they are made and the laws by which they work. The imagination, as I see it, gives us knowledge of things, but never exact knowledge, since it cannot and does not wish to study them under the fixed and artificial conditions which make exact knowledge possible. The world it reflects is therefore in a sense a quite different world from that of science, for it is through studying the movement and the individuality that it tries, as Wordsworth said, to see into the life of things. Its scope is vaguer and wider than that of science, for exact knowledge is only a fragment of the knowledge which we need in order to live a human life.

Limitations of Exact Knowledge

So that it is in our living that the imagination is indispensable. For we can have no exact knowledge of ourselves or other people; we cannot understand our neighbours by means of exact knowledge. There is no exact answer to the problems we have never solved and are always troubled by; yet we must have some faculty that deals with them, so long as they remain with us. We cannot ask science with its exact knowledge to tell us whether our lives have a meaning, or why we should pursue good and avoid evil, or how we should live with our neighbours, or form for ourselves an image of human life. Yet these things perpetually concern us. Our life would become quite barbarous if we ceased to have an imaginative picture of it; we should not in any human sense know ourselves or other people; we should become statistical entities, categories, similar to the figures described in George Orwell's book. The imagination is then a necessary everyday faculty, exercised in various degrees by us all. What I want to suggest is that it is not exercised now so naturally and spontaneously as it used to be; the category comes in, and with many of us comes in first; and to regard humanity categorically is to dehumanise it, and make abstract this warm, various, disconcerting moving life which we live. Civilisations have existed without the enormous armoury of exact knowledge and statistical information we have at our disposal; they cannot exist without the shaping power which makes us conscious of our own lives.

As against this warm intimate concern with living things as they live and move and feel their life, analytical thought is necessarily detached. It is concerned with the accurate registration of knowledge, and cannot be concerned with anything else. The imagination, on the other hand, is involved with life, committed, to use the phraseology of the Existentialists. Science is committed to its enquiry; in every other way, compared with the imagination, it is detached. And being

detached, it can be picked up and used as an instrument by powerful men and powerful states, indifferently for good or evil. The imagination cannot be used in this way, for it is already committed. You may say that the imagination is employed on a large scale by the propagandist departments of tyrannical states. But a simpler term for this would be mere lying; at best it is a kind of false imagination. True imagination cannot be of any use to a tyranny; only true science can. I have heard it advanced by scientists that the imagination is merely the last surviving vestige of the old primitive magical technique by which man once tried to explain everything to himself: the rising and setting of the sun, the phases of the moon, the course of the seasons, the growth or failure of crops, and so on. Science, they say, has found true explanations for these and many other things. Why should it not find the true explanation for human behaviour, and in time replace the fumbling explanations of the imagination with exact ones?

There are many answers to this, but the most practical is the most relevant. There is a science by which we try to find a true explanation of our behaviour, the science of psychology, which is still in its early stages. Yet in spite of its imperfection, it too can be used by powerful interests and the heads of states, simply because it is a science, and can show its own scraps of more or less exact knowledge. It has been used to condition the minds of peoples. No modern tyranny could be run without a systematic employment of psychology. The Nazi Party, for instance, while publicly denouncing modern psychology, made use of its most up to date techniques in choosing officers for their armies and in intimidating the people. They could not have employed Goethe or Shakespeare for such a purpose, for Shakespeare and Goethe were already committed to a quite different conception of life.

I do not want to give the impression that in saying all this I am making an attack on science. The achievements of science are so dazzling that denunciation of them would be silly and praise superfluous. I am merely concerned to outline the human situation which has been brought about by these achievements. It is an admittedly difficult situation; it has come upon us without our quite knowing how; it must be the result of a process that has been going on for a long time. History can give us a survey of the development of science, but it cannot explain to us how we landed in the human situation in which we find ourselves. A speculative guess at an explanation is all I can advance, and I advance it with trepidation. It is that during the last three centuries, slowly at first, more and more rapidly as time went on, the balance between the two powers of the mind I have been discussing, the imaginative and the scientific, has been lost.

Let us assume that the process began when it was realised that by carefully observing and studying nature we could gain mastery over it. In the mind of sincere enquirers this prospect evoked a great hope for the future of mankind. When a hope opens before us our energies

stream irresistibly into it. At the beginning the hope was a scientific one, cherished by scientists alone; in due course it became the general hope of western Europe. A romanticism of science arose in the eighteenth century, and became almost universal in the nineteenth, the age of progress. It was thought that science was preparing and would bring in an ideal state of human life. Scientists as recent as Pasteur and Pavlov still believed this. Few of us believe it now. Our life is a life which seems to us to have advanced too quickly and too far, and simultaneously to have remained marking time on the same spot. In the resulting hiatus, or rather in the tension between more or less stationary human nature and the technologically advancing world of science, we live our unsatisfactory life, in which we can feel at moments that we are existing in a future that does not fit us.

To bridge this gap, to resolve this tension, is obviously one of our main problems. I have been putting in a plea for the imagination, but I do not pretend that the imagination alone, no matter how powerfully exerted, can solve this problem. Certainly, to take a hypothetical case, it may be reasonable to think that if the imagination and the scientific intellect had grown more or less equally in the past three centuries, our state now would not be as bad as it is. A lopsided development, whether of the body or the mind, is a diseased development, and is bound to lead to strange and unforeseen and dangerous conditions. We are conscious of the danger, and conscious that we lack something needed by us to avert it. If we were asked what we lack, we would probably say that it is the moral and intellectual power to use wisely the unexpected energies put into our hands. The imagination cannot create that power. But it can foster it by nourishing it on a true and vivid sense of human life, and humanise it in a world becoming more and more general and abstract. Moral and intellectual understanding which concerns itself only with general things, with movements or historical processes, becomes mechanical and turns into the servant of a new kind of barbarism. It ignores the unique human experience which we must all come to know by ourselves, in our transit from birth to death. In its concern with the process, it has no regard left for the living human being, who must look after his neglected existence as best he can, in the midst of enormous objective forces which seem to have a development of their own, independent of him.

To see how necessary the imagination is to us is one thing; to speculate how it is to be revived is another. It can only do its work at all, it seems to me, on the assumption that life has a meaning. It must have a moral basis, perhaps a religious basis; and it cannot create that by itself. A belief in the significance of life must exist before the imagination can give a significant image of life. The imagination is more likely to be revived by a moral or religious revival than by any attempt made by itself, any cult of the imagination. The solution of its problem lies outside itself.—*Third Programme*

Self-Interest as a Motive

By A. R. VIDLER

A FEW weeks ago, I ate two Sunday dinners on end. It is a thing I have never done before and devoutly hope I shall never do again—unless of course reincarnation should turn out to be a fact, and in a future existence I shall have once more the appetite of a schoolboy. This is what happened. I had just completed an agreeable and substantial meal in my own house, when a reminder was brought to me that I had accepted an invitation to dine that day with some neighbouring friends. I knew the occasion had been arranged with much care as well as kindness: and so, having to make up my mind on the spur of the moment, I decided that I should cause less embarrassment to my friends, however much I might cause to myself, if I did not allude to the fact that I had already eaten.

My decision was probably wrong, though it was well intended. I make this rather disgraceful confession in order to show that one can do the same thing twice in the course of a single hour from quite different motives. My motive in eating the first meal was, I take it, simple self-interest. That is to say, I have found by experience that it is to my own interest to satisfy my appetite for food at regular times each day. My motive in eating the second meal was—so I thought at the time—purely altruistic, that is, to give pleasure to others. Certainly

I had no appetite for it, though I wished I had, since excellent fare was provided. But I am not so sure now that my motive was altruistic: perhaps all I wanted to do was to save my own confusion of face as far as possible. And if so, my motive this time, too, was self-interested.

But that only shows how difficult this question of motives is. When we think we are being altruistic, it may be nothing else but a subtle way of pleasing ourselves, that is, of getting pleasure from the sense that we are giving pleasure to other people. In fact, I suppose that in a sense all our actions are self-interested: we should not do anything unless we had some sort of an interest in doing it; unless we wanted to do it. Yet it is also true that we sometimes do things that we do not want to do. To take a trivial instance, often during the past few months I have taken my dog for a walk in the pouring rain, when I should have much preferred to stay in and keep dry. Is that an example of pure altruism? Not at all. In this case my motive was very likely self-interest: I wanted the satisfaction of feeling that I treat my dog decently.

All that emerges so far is that self-interest as a motive is somewhat deceptive and complicated. Anyone who thinks he can settle the matter with a sweeping generalisation is sure to be wrong. The American

critic who said: 'I've yet to find a man worth his salt in any direction who didn't think of himself first and foremost', was certainly wrong, because I doubt if anyone is as completely preoccupied with self as all that. But on the other hand, those moralists who tell us that we ought never to think of our own good but only of the good of our neighbours are also much too simple and sweeping. For one thing, we cannot help thinking of our own good: and then, seeking the good of our neighbours is more easily said than done. Which neighbours, and in what order of priority?

Nobility of Self Respect

It seems to me that the first thing we must do is to recognise quite frankly that human beings are so constituted that they are bound to be interested in themselves, to care for themselves, and to seek their own good as they understand it. 'Nature', said Cicero, 'has endowed every species of living creature with the instinct of self-preservation'; and that includes human beings as well as animals. Unless we had this self-interested instinct, or urge, or motive, or whatever you call it, we should have no chance of biological survival. We should never grow; still less grow up. It is self-interest or, if you like, self-love that impels us to find a standing-ground for ourselves in the world; that moves us to find means of sustaining our physical existence; that prompts us to build up a common life with other people, and at the same time to become persons with our own individual characters instead of merely identical units like the worker-bees in a hive. So—at any rate at this level—we may say what Shakespeare makes the Dauphin say to his father: 'Self-love, my liege, is not so vile a sin as self-neglecting'. Indeed, I think we must accept the conclusion of a reverend and Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford who said: 'Respect to self and its ultimate good pertains to the very nobility of man's nature; without which all the moral solidity of his character would evaporate, nature would be unmoored and drift away from its anchorage'.

That is the first point: self-interest as a motive is necessary for life and for the good life. But, you may say, this commendation of self-interest or self-love is strange doctrine to come from a clergyman. Where is this doctrine to be found in the Bible? Surely the message of the preacher is that we should deny ourselves: 'Whoever would save his life shall lose it'. The love that is praised in the New Testament 'seeketh not its own'. That is perfectly true and we shall come to it before we have finished. But it does not do away with the fact that it is a basic condition of human life and of social life that we *should* seek our own—that we should take care of ourselves and fend for ourselves and look after our own welfare, and not be like spoiled children who expect everything to be done for them. We are made to be self-supporting and not parasites. We may provide for ourselves either by individual enterprise or by the combined prudence of the welfare state: but in either case self-interest is at the bottom of it, and the world could not go on without it.

I admit that the Bible does not say in so many words, 'Thou shalt look after thine own interests'. No: but it takes it for granted all the way through that men will do that. It says, for instance, both in the Old and New Testaments: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself'—which assumes that we shall be loving ourselves anyway. We do not need to be specially commanded to love ourselves, as St. Augustine pointed out long ago: we do that naturally, instinctively, inevitably. On the other hand, we do need to be told to love God and to love our neighbours, because we do not do that naturally, instinctively, inevitably. There was no need for God Himself to tell us to love ourselves: for His servant nature had told us that already, and it would be dangerous to have it drummed into us that we ought to do what we find it all too easy and pleasant to do anyway. But we do need something more than nature to tell us that self-love, though it is necessary to make the world go round, also makes the world go wrong: for this is much less acceptable information.

'Selfishness', said Mr. Gladstone, speaking at Hawarden in 1890, 'is the greatest curse of the human race'. And in saying that he was echoing the teaching of the whole Bible and of a thousand saints and prophets, and of most non-Christian moralists. Which of us in fact does not readily and eagerly assent to the proposition that selfishness is the curse of the human race? Other people's selfishness, of course; and that unspoken qualification is a symptom of our own selfishness. What is the difference, then, between selfishness and rightful or necessary self-interest? In the first place, if self-interest means having regard to your own interests, selfishness means having regard *only* to your own interests. Self-interest moves me to eat and so to keep alive

and in good health. Selfishness moves me to eat as much as I want without regard to the needs of the other members of my household or of my more distant neighbours.

But there is more to it than that. Self-interest is necessary to life, yet at the same time I do not see how we can avoid saying that it is a necessary evil. For self-interest inevitably inclines me to take it for granted that I am myself the centre of the world, around whose concerns everything revolves. That is to say, before I know where I am, self-interest has rotted away into selfishness and self-centredness. This, I suppose, is why the Bible spends far more time in attacking self-centredness and all its works than in commending self-interest.

Take, for example, the question of property, the ownership of possessions. Some ownership of possessions is necessary to give you a stake in the world, a stake in society. As Charles Kingsley said:

Possession means to sit astride the world,
Instead of having it astride of you.

The private property of an individual, or of the family or larger society of which he is a member, gives him an assurance of security, a sense of responsibility; it encourages industry, energy, originality. It enables a man or a family to strike roots, to acquire an individual dignity. It gives a man's character a firm pivot round which to build up its fabric and a fixed centre round which associations and relations and obligations may gather and grow.

I do not say that all this is explicitly stated in the Bible, which anyhow is not a manual of moral philosophy. But it is implicit there in the same way that self-interest as a motive is taken for granted. The Bible does not say directly that people ought to have their own possessions, but it says so indirectly—for instance, in the eighth commandment: 'Thou shalt not steal'. Obviously there could be no such thing as stealing if there was no private property or if everything belonged to everybody indiscriminately. Or again the command in Deuteronomy that 'thou shalt not remove thy neighbour's landmark' assumes the existence of private property. The Bible has more to say about the abuses of ownership than about ownership itself. It is an abuse of ownership to forget that God is the ultimate owner of all things, and that men are responsible to Him for the possessions He entrusts to them. Those men are especially guilty who give heed to the lust for accumulating possessions for themselves without regard to other people's needs. 'Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field till there be no room'. 'I will come near to you to judgment, and I will be a swift witness . . . against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the Lord of hosts'. There is a vast difference between property *for use* and property *for power*.

But even the personal ownership of possessions for use, which is a good thing in itself, is the occasion of many evil things: it gives rise to pride and envy and covetousness. That is what I meant when I said that self-interest is always rotting away into selfishness or self-centredness. Self-centredness makes me regard my ownership of things as final and myself as lord of all that I possess. I forget that the ultimate owner of all things is God; and that He simply entrusts certain of His possessions to me for my use, so that by means of them I may glorify Him, set forward His purpose, and serve my fellow-men. I forget that I am only a steward: I imagine that I own things absolutely and may do with them just what I like. Or because I am selfish, I am tormented by envy of those to whom are entrusted more or different possessions. Or again, never content with what I have and can use, I covet what I have not and do not really need.

A Man's Duty

Bishop Butler, who was one of the greatest English moralists, used to say that a man's duty is to have 'a cool self-love', that is, a dispassionate regard to his own interests. But the trouble with self-love is that it won't keep cool: it is always getting heated, and feverish, and boiling over. And so the human race, which according to God's design would be one family in which all regarded one another's interests as well as their own, has become ravaged with discord and tumult and the restless chaos of greedy and conflicting wills. That is why Carlyle, who also was a great moralist in his way, was quite justified in speaking of 'the Golden Calf of self-love'.

Self-interest, as we have seen, is a necessary motive: and yet man always pursues his own interests more or less selfishly and idolises himself. That sounds like a paradox but it is something worse than

(continued on page 758)

NEWS DIARY

May 2-8

Wednesday, May 2

Western delegates in Paris submit their drafts for agenda of meeting of Foreign Ministers

Shah signs decrees to nationalise Persian oil industry

Mr. Shinwell states that British casualties in recent fighting in Korea were over 1,000 killed, wounded or missing

Thursday, May 3

H.M. the King opens Festival of Britain from steps of St. Paul's Cathedral

General MacArthur begins testimony before Senate Committees

Russia to raise internal loan of about £2,700,000,000

Friday, May 4

Their Majesties the King and Queen pay their first visit to the South Bank Exhibition in London

Syria and Israel agree to cease-fire in frontier area north of Lake Galilee

Irish Parliament dissolved

Saturday, May 5

United Nations forces move forward again after communist offensive

Mr. Ernest Davies, British delegate in Paris, states that Mr. Gromyko is still using meetings for propaganda

Nearly 60,000 people visit South Bank Exhibition on first full day

Sunday, May 6

Mr. Herbert Morrison speaks on Paris meetings and says Mr. Gromyko is trying to hold up Western Powers' defence measures

Austrians go to polls to elect new President
Israel accuses Syria of renewing border attacks

Monday, May 7

President of Board of Trade makes statement about British exports to China

General Marshall, Secretary of Defence, testifies before U.S. Senate committees on subject of General MacArthur's charges

French General Election to be held on June 17

Tuesday, May 8

The King and Queen of Denmark arrive in England on State visit

Anglo-Iranian Oil Company seeks for arbitration with Persian Government on proposal to nationalise oil industry

Minister of Supply announces a probable reduction in delivery of machine tools to civilian industry



The service of dedication and thanksgiving in St. Paul's Cathedral on May 3 before the opening of the Festival of Britain: members of the Royal family are seen listening to the address by the Archbishop of Canterbury



Two decorations from the South Bank Exhibition: above, mural by Graham Sutherland from the Land of Britain Pavilion: left, hydraulic fountain with the Skylon and 'The Islanders', a sculpture by Siegfried Charoux, in the background

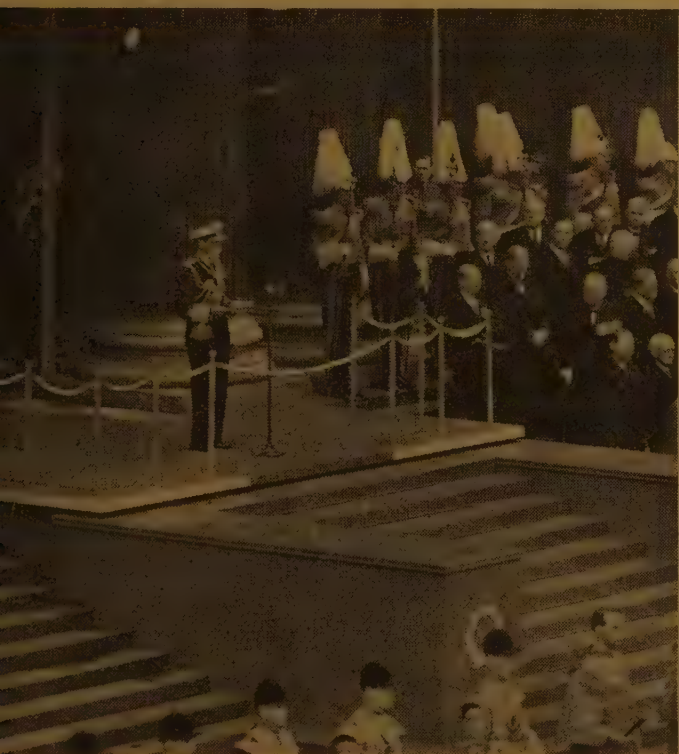


The floodlit scene from Waterloo Bridge to Westminster. On the left is the South Bank Exhibition

H.M. the King and Queen pay their first visit to the South Bank Exhibition in London



the Festival of Britain open from the steps of St. Paul's. His festival as 'a visible sign of national achievement and confidence', 'no time for despondency'. Below, a closer view of the ceremony royal family on the left and members of the Houses of Parliament Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition on the right



On the morning of May 4 Their Majesties the King and Queen visited the South Bank Exhibition. In the photograph they are seen entering the Dome of Discovery



On the evening of May 3 the King opened the Royal Festival Concert Hall on the South Bank; the ceremony included a service and a short programme of British music: the orchestra and choir are seen taking part in the service



on, and on the right the Victoria Embankment. Many other buildings in London and elsewhere are being floodlit in honour of the Festival

(continued from page 755)

a paradox: it is a dilemma. Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me? Who shall deliver me from this inescapable concern with myself? Christians believe that this is precisely what Christ can do for all men. He himself was the embodiment or incarnation of perfectly disinterested love, the love of God himself, which gives itself and all it has, expecting nothing in return. The miracle of his life and death and resurrection was the irruption into this old world of God's new world. Living in the strength of God's forgiveness means that you still have to go on living in the old world, where you cannot escape the necessity of being concerned with your own interests. At the same time you realise now that you are becoming a citizen of another world in which the Spirit of Christ has already started to make all things new. But only a few men, like St. Francis of Assisi, are called and enabled to follow Christ's teaching and way of life quite literally.

I want to finish with a story which illustrates in an extreme form the moral predicaments which men have to face in this world, and also the way in which Christ stops you from being self-satisfied even when you are satisfied that you are doing what is for the best. It is

the true story of a young American. He has told how during the war he overtook a band of hobbling, heavily laden and famished refugees who were trekking out of Burma. He had just enough food and strength to carry only himself across the mountains. In this situation he says he fell to thinking of St. Francis. Would St. Francis, God's Troubadour, have flung all he had to the refugees, although, when they shared it out, it would provide them with only a moment's betterment? Or was it possible that his little would multiply with his courage and hope until it was swollen enough to get him and his brethren across? 'No', he said at the time, 'I have decided that the gamble asks too much of hope, pays too little heed to the realities of bread and distance. One should save his life for a better accounting even if it means only a more promising opportunity for sacrifice . . . But' (he added) 'St. Francis walks at my side to trouble me'.

Perhaps at last the only thing that can keep self-interest as a motive or the ownership of possessions from going bad on us is that we, too, should have St. Francis walking by our side to trouble us—which is another way of saying that we should be haunted by Christ's example of disinterested love even when we find ourselves least able to follow it.

—Home Service

Letters to the Editor

The Editor welcomes letters on broadcasting subjects or topics arising out of articles or talks printed in THE LISTENER but reserves the right to shorten letters for reasons of space

The B.B.C. and May Day

Sir,—No ordinary mortal can hope to plumb the mysteries of B.B.C. programme-making and, on the whole, patient listeners have by now resigned themselves to surfeits of certain subjects and complete neglect of others. But it is the B.B.C.'s idea of topicality that causes me to write these lines.

There is a lot to be said for featuring Empire Day, 'Mother's Day', Armistice Day, Navy Day, etc., in the programmes of the B.B.C., but though one wonders sometimes at the assiduity with which your calendar researchers succeed in unearthing these Red-Letter Days, one cannot but pay grudging tribute to their thoroughness in recalling to us the days commemorative of (more or less) great events.

It is therefore all the more surprising that these self-same people, so anxious to 'plug' all kinds of days, should have remained completely unaware of the fact that the First of May is celebrated by hundreds of millions of people all over the world as the day when the workers of scores of countries proudly look back on their achievements over the past sixty years. May I point out too that these celebrations are not confined to the 'Iron Curtain' countries? Radio Hamburg, for instance, opened its programme with the reading of a solemn appeal from the German trade unions to all working Germans. Equally the French radio and the Dutch stations, the Belgian stations, as well as Copenhagen, Oslo and Stockholm, featured the First of May in their morning programmes.

Whom is the B.B.C. afraid of offending? Or is this amazing silence merely an expression of the B.B.C.'s much-vaunted 'objectivity'?

Yours, etc.,

Belvedere

STEPHEN W. POLLAK

Contemporary Scientific Mythology

Sir,—Mr. Toulmin either ignores his critics, as in my case—although my point was in principle the same as Dr. Huxley's—or resorts to bad analogies and caricatures as a substitute for attempts to understand them. Thus Dr. Huxley is represented in his latest letter as 'leaping blindfold' to 'we are the heirs of evolution'. This is a mere caricature of the careful statements in *Evolution: the Modern Synthesis*.

An advocate of careful reading, Mr. Toulmin should apply himself to the study of Chapter X

especially of that work before criticising Dr. Huxley further. There he will find these words:

It is we who have read purpose into evolution, as earlier men projected will and emotion into inorganic phenomena like storm or earthquake. If we wish to work towards a purpose for the future of man, we must formulate that purpose ourselves. Purposes in life are made, not found.

But if we cannot discover a purpose in evolution, we can discern a direction—the line of evolutionary progress. And this past direction can serve as a guide in formulating our purpose for the future.

Since he also misrepresents Marxism—'history is on our side'—Mr. Toulmin might usefully look again at the words of Marx:

Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly found, given and transmitted from the past.

Yours, etc.,

Birmingham

D. J. McCracken

Mind and Matter

Sir,—In his talks on 'Mind and Matter', Dr. Russell Brain has implicitly assumed the correctness of a certain view of the psychology of perception. This view, expounded systematically first by Hermann von Helmholtz in his *Handbuch der physiologischen Optik* (Leipzig, 1867), is superficially plausible, but has been experimentally shown to be totally inadequate as an explanation of the facts of perception. It is the view that what is perceived is a pattern of sensory impressions plus a 'meaning'—associated images, feelings, judgments and so on. That this view is inadequate is well known to anyone acquainted with the works of such psychologists as Sir Frederick Bartlett and Dr. R. H. Thouless. Dr. Thouless summarises the relevant evidence in Chapter 12 of his *General and Social Psychology* (London, 1937). He concludes that 'a perception is not something produced by a stimulus but by the activity of the organism itself. The role of the stimulus may be supposed to be to control the perceptual activity of the organism in such a way as to bring it into practically useful relationship with the outside world'.

More recently, Professor J. Z. Young, in the fourth of his Reith Lectures, has described how people born blind but who later receive their

sight, have to learn to use their eyes, to see shapes, and so on. 'We think that we see, as we say, naturally. But we have in fact learned a whole set of rules during childhood'. To talk of 'rules' is perhaps misleading. We are not told the rules of how to see shapes—the rules, we might say, are expressed not in propositions but in a certain organisation of the brain, the result of experience. Perhaps in the case of colour this organisation exists at birth. Even so it is as hard for a literate Englishman not to attend to the marks 'Don't Read This' in the way we call 'reading them' as it is for him not to attend to them in the way we call 'noticing their colour'—and we undoubtedly have to learn to read. Whether the appropriate organisation exists at birth or has to be learned is not the point. Once it is established both reading and noticing colour come equally 'naturally', provided the attention is directed in the appropriate way. It is a myth that there must be, in the case of reading, an intermediary conscious recalling of our past experience with each word before the meaning is realised, just as it is a myth that in perceiving how brightly coloured an object is, we consciously make allowance for the illumination. We can and do perceive what an object in the hand is, without noticing such things as 'the posture of my fingers and the extent to which they are separated by the object from the palm of my hand', simply because our attention is directed not to our fingers, but to the object. The nerve impulses from the fingers do their work, but they do it, as we might say, unconsciously. To perceive something, then, it is not only necessary that the 'appropriate physiological events should take place in the appropriate areas of the brain', it is also necessary that the brain should be in a certain state, a state psychologically describable in terms of 'active interest' and 'attention'—which, in turn, are functions of inheritance and experience.

When we talk of attending to different aspects of something—colour, shape, size, number, texture, etc.—we are inclined to think that this is like paying attention to, say, different figures in a photograph. But in attending to different figures in a photograph we are attending to different things in the same way, whereas in attending to, say, the meaning of, and the number of letters in, 'Read This', we are attending to the same thing in different ways. In short, perception is an activity, a matter of using in a

certain way data which comes to the brain in the form of nerve impulses. We are conscious only of the result of this activity. Dr. Brain is mistaken in saying that 'we have direct awareness of the physical events in our own brains and when we thus perceive them we find them to be sensations, feelings and other conscious states'. To call the nerve impulses, etc., 'sense-data', to say that we are aware of them, and to think that they are somehow meaningful to us in themselves, is to give scientific support to a vast amount of bad philosophising about our sensing sense-data and perceiving physical objects, about alternative ways of describing our experience (sense-data 'languages'), and about physical objects being somehow constructed out of sense-data.—Yours, etc.,

Cambridge

G. N. A. VESEY

Fifteenth-century Music

Sir,—I should like to make a mild protest against Mr. Cooper's criticism (THE LISTENER, April 26) of the broadcast on April 18 of fifteenth-century English church music. Even allowing for a certain personal bias—I prepared performing editions of the first two pieces—I feel that some of the points he makes are barely justifiable:

(i) 'A most abstruse and unrewarding entertainment'. A large amount of English music of this period appeared during the first quarter of this century in the volumes of the *Deukmāler der Tonkunst in Oesterreich* devoted to the Trent MSS., and the entire contents of the Old Hall MS. have been available in printed form since before the war. Scholarly works may be abstruse to the complete layman, but should not be so to the professional critic. Perhaps the unfamiliarity of the idiom may have caused Mr. Cooper to find the pieces unrewarding.

(ii) Granted that the programme notes may have been too technical, Mr. Cooper appears to have misunderstood the one about the canon in Pycard's Gloria. This is not indicated in the original MS. and was first pointed out by Professor Strunk (not Strungk) in an article in *The Musical Quarterly*, which is not a very abstruse publication. The addition of an extra voice, as the composer intended; may not have 'enhanced the significance of the music' but it does make it sound a good deal better.

(iii) Not all the pieces were isorhythmic, but in any case it is to be hoped that a few intelligent music-lovers might be interested in hearing something about the technique of composition in the Middle Ages. A certain intellectual and imaginative effort is necessary to understand what Bartók is driving at (or Bach, for that matter), and I am sorry to see Mr. Cooper denying it to fifteenth-century music. He is depriving himself of a great deal of pleasure.

(iv) The excursion into critical demagoguery at the end of his article, so clearly marked by that tell-tale word 'highbrow', is particularly distressing. Whether or not the melodies are naive is a matter of opinion (to me they seem as sophisticated as the late Gothic art with which they are contemporary), and the fact that several of them are in compound duple time (not many in triple) is irrelevant; what does matter is that when an attempt is made to bridge the unfortunate gap between musicians and musicologists, a responsible critic should treat it in such an off-hand manner, and apparently subscribe to the belief that those of us who do get something out of medieval music are merely indulging in a form of preciosity.—Yours, etc.,

Oxford

JEREMY NOBLE

They have, of course, every right to their interest in musical archaeology; but it was my concern, as the week's hearth-side music critic, to consider the claims of this music to be broadcast. If the general public's impression is correct and the Third Programme is designed by a few experts in London to amuse a few more experts in Oxford and Cambridge, then these isorhythmic Glorias and Credos, with their hidden canons, are proper material for broadcasting. But if the appeal is broader (as that of any programmes designed by a Corporation using public funds surely must be) and the Third Programme is in fact an instrument—however skilfully disguised—of public education, then the already considerable amount of medieval church music by the recognised masters included in each week's programmes is surely sufficient, without exploring the by-ways of what is, to all but a handful of specialists, an abstruse subject. I am, as several of the protesting letters pointed out, a complete layman in the domain of fifteenth-century music and it was for the laymen among listeners, or potential listeners, to the Third Programme that I wrote.]

Use and Abuse of Photography

Sir,—In THE LISTENER of May 3, Mr. Tebbutt claims that photographs of mountains should be judged by mountaineers and photographs of rivers by fishermen. This will not do. It was precisely the point of my talk that photography is still, after more than a hundred years, being judged by every kind of standard but its own.

He who ventures on authorship must expect to be judged by literary standards. If his book imparts information it may be valuable, but imparting information will not make it a good book. A bad photograph of a hen may impart information about hens, or bring a thrill to the heart of any hen-lover. But it will still be a bad photograph.—Yours, etc.,

London, S.W.3

TOM HOPKINSON

Irish Plea

Sir,—Referring to the letter in THE LISTENER of April 26, I presume Mr. Christopher MacCarthy is an Irish 'exile' indulging in the usual nostalgic longing for the Green Isle. (Far away fields are always green in the imagination. In reality there are less pleasing colours, even in Ireland.) Judging by his typically exuberant language, Ireland always first, the rest nowhere.

However, in fairness to the B.B.C., Mr. MacCarthy should know that their Northern Ireland programmes excel in the output of Irish music, not confined to that of this province. In addition to the usual songs, etc., the Belfast Light Orchestra's 'Irish Rhythms' are widely appreciated even by listeners in Eire. In fact, southern Irish friends tell me that Belfast's (and even London's) St. Patrick's Day programmes are outstanding, especially seeing that the greater part of Ireland are not subscribing listeners.

Many Ulster listeners indeed (of whom I am one) consider that the high proportion of typically southern Irish musical items from Belfast does not convey a true impression of the North, with its somewhat different tradition. After all, a Ballymena girl in County Antrim differs considerably in type from the Kerry or Connaught 'colleen'. She has much more of Scotland in her cultural background.

One can easily have too much of the 'Galway Bay', 'Killarney', etc., type of song. Even English programmes have a good proportion of Irish comedians and other artists, and this can be overdone, as for instance the 'Great Gilhooly' flop. Lough Erne in County Fermanagh is as beautiful as Killarney's lakes but is as yet unsung. I will however say that Killarney town wins as far as the 'pubs' are concerned!

Finally, I would suggest that Mr. MacCarthy should appeal to his native Athlone radio station, which is heard very well in England.

Yours, etc.,

Belfast

A. H. SUMMERS

Makin' a Dictionary

Sir,—May I draw attention to Yorkshire dialect 'warf', presumably akin to 'werch', meaning tasteless or lacking salt?—Yours, etc.,

Manchester

A. PICKLES

'Regional' Novelists

Sir,—It is probably very unfair to Mr. David Paul to pluck out one of his more general remarks for question; but it was most rash of him to commit himself to the pontifical and provocative, 'Regional novelists are a region in themselves, with Hardy as the solitary eminence' (THE LISTENER, May 3).

Surely Giovanni Verga can claim to be an eminence the equal of Hardy, and if it is an eminence less familiar to the English reader and less frequently scaled by him, it is none the less a real and considerable feature of the landscape, not only of the region of regionalism, but of the European novel generally.

Most unfortunately ignorance of Verga is highly developed in England—despite the exhortations of D. H. Lawrence and the more recent seductive wooing of Mr. V. S. Pritchett. It is hard to imagine Mr. Paul as one of the ignorant and recalcitrant and it would be all the more saddening, therefore, if his comment were construed as giving tacit consent to the continued neglect of a major European novelist.—Yours, etc.,

Leeds

FREDERICK MAY

Portrait of Harriet Taylor

Sir,—Others beside myself must have been struck by the astonishingly beautiful portrait of Harriet Taylor used as an illustration in Professor Hayek's book on J. S. Mill and reproduced in THE LISTENER with Dr. Leavis' review on April 26. I wonder if any of your readers know who painted it?—Yours, etc.,

London, W.2

FRANCIS WATSON

Robertson's 'Caste'

Sir,—I owe my life to the kindness of printer's readers and sub-editors. When I write of *The Mill on the Floss* by T. S. Eliot or of Galsworthy's 'Candida', who but they save me? But they must not save me too quickly! I wrote last week of Robertson's 'Caste'. Some kindly hand added Forbes, for the sake of greater precision. It should have been Tom.—Yours, etc.,

London, N.W.8

PHILIP HOPE-WALLACE

Professor Harold Laski

Sir,—I have undertaken to write a memoir of the late Professor Harold J. Laski. There must be many who possess letters from him, or other manuscripts and documents. I should be very glad to see them. They will be carefully copied and returned. All such MSS. should be sent to me at the address below.—Yours, etc.,

10, Great Turnstile,

KINGSLEY MARTIN

London, W.C.1

Harold Gilman

Sir,—I am preparing a biography of the painter Harold Gilman (1876-1919) and a catalogue *raisonnée* of his work. I wonder if any of your readers have letters to or from Gilman or any of his associates in the Camden Town Group, which have reference to the formation of the Group and its three exhibitions? If these can be borrowed the greatest care will be taken and they will be returned at once after copies have been made. Costs of postage will be refunded.

It would also be of the greatest value to receive information (size, medium, date, etc.) of paintings or drawings by Gilman.—Yours, etc.,

57, Queenswood Court,

ERIC WESTBROOK

King's Avenue, Clapham, S.W.

[Mr. Martin Cooper writes:

My impatient and cavalier dismissal of a programme of fifteenth-century church music has provoked challenges from several angry champions.

The Claw of the Sea-Puss

HONOR TRACY on the work of James Thurber

AS we all know only too well, tragedy and comedy lie close together. How often we hear it said of some favourite wag that he is an awfully gloomy fellow under it all: but that is his funeral and very properly so we may think. The business of a comedian, after all, is to cheer us up and jolly us along, take

his puny, faltering stroke. A newspaper blowing unexpectedly out of an archway and embracing his knees is enough to chill his blood. Perhaps worst of all, the tormented creature keeps looking behind him as he walks along darkening streets out of the fear that he is being softly followed by little men padding along in single file, about a foot and a half high, large-eyed and whiskered.

And at this Thurber displays to the full his subtle, his ingenious powers of knock-out. For as we follow him along his *via dolorosa* there slowly rises in our hearts, mingled with all the pity and terror, a fatuous complacency. We likewise have felt the string tighten about our heads, we too may have our funny little ways—the sudden loud ejaculation of an unsuitable word in a crowded place, a total incapacity to remember our names when asked for them by officials or, it may be, a recurrent and overwhelming conviction that we are back in 1933—but no tiny whiskered men come padding after us. Thurber has of course foreseen this reaction and he is ready for it. 'It is unfortunate, however, that even a well-ordered life cannot lead anybody around the inevitable doom that waits in the skies', he casually winds up: 'As F. Hopkinson Smith long pointed out, the claw of the sea-puss gets us all in the end'.

But did this Mr. Hopkinson Smith ever point out any such thing? For most people, here will be the first intimation that a sea-puss exists. It is, we suspect, Mr. Thurber and no one else who has brought that sea-puss into our lives, clawed and malignant, on top of what we have to put up with already. A merciful man would at least have added a sketch of her, exorcising a little the fear her name calls up by giving it a shape. Elsewhere, we find a hint of her terrible, curling paw in the wave which Thurber has drawn, as an illustration to the word 'Abundance', engulfing man, woman and dog. She seems, now that we know she lives and waits for us, to lurk in many Thurber sketches of threatening cloud and creeping tide. Here, however, he lightly refers to her in passing, leaving



'Two thousand people were in full flight': Thurber's illustration to 'The Day the Dam Broke' From 'My Life and Hard Times'

us out of ourselves and so return us to the daily round refreshed and soothed. The pain in his heart is no more than the grit in the oyster; it is the pearl, and not the oyster's distress, which is of interest.

But James Thurber will have none of it. He demands that we assist at each and every one of his funerals, accompanying it step by step through grotesque misadventures until at last the coffin springs open and the dead man sits up and, writhing with laughter, we recognise ourselves. I know of no comic writer, indeed of hardly any writer at all, who more deftly awakens unease, anxiety and dread in the heart than Thurber. The fact that our eyes stream while our cheeks blanch in no way takes from the sinister quality of his art. Even in 1951 one may read the daily newspapers more calmly, with greater resignation, than certain of the *Fables for Our Time*, or the *Preface to Life*.

Consider for a moment this *Preface* with special attention to the concluding lines. It is the nightmarish story of a Person hopelessly and for ever Displaced while never moving a yard from his native land. The kind of man most apt and qualified for this exile, according to Thurber, is the writer of light pieces running from 1,000 to 2,000 words—enormous penalty for trivial cause, so characteristic of our day. This light, brief writer at times apparently will telephone to his own house, ask for himself in a low tone and, on learning that he is out, collapse in hard-breathing relief. It is all very well for the callous and the unimaginative to say: What of it? It was all right, wasn't it? He was out, wasn't he? The fact remains that one of these days he may be in. He may come to the telephone and speak, with all the hideous strain and embarrassment that a situation of this kind must entail. This sort of person, too, playfully slaps gangsters, mistaking them for old school friends. Nothing in the world is easier than to put him off



'You gah dam pussy cats!'

From 'Men, Women and Dogs'

it at that, and us in a state of pitiful apprehension: ready, in fact, to pass on to a consideration of his life and hard times.

Thurber, then, has no use for the mere spectator. My world and welcome to it! he says, blandly motioning us on into chaos. Here joy is only found in the bottle and peace in the grave: there is neither safety nor repose. The inhabitants of this world are unable to understand themselves or others. The family unit, and basis of society, consists of an unpleasing, pretentious and often bacchanalian woman, an ignominious, defeated little man, and a puzzled but hopeful and kindly dog. Daily life is full of strange, unexplained episodes having as their result an increase of confusion in people's minds and of their hostility towards each other. In the quiet hours of the night a seal pops up behind a bed in which a married couple is reclining and barks: and the little incident, far from drawing the pair closer together in a sense of the wonder and glory and unexpectedness of the world, merely

deepens their mutual dislike and suspicion. One knows that a seal has barked, the other is equally positive that no seal can be there. One relies on the evidence of sense, the other on the laws of probability. Neither is in the least interested in the other's point of view: the seeds of further, bitter dissension are sown.

In lives so uncertain and so disjointed, panic, of course, plays a considerable part. Somebody in the street, for private reasons, breaks into a run: someone else does the same: in less than ten minutes everyone is running. Somebody raises a cry of 'The dam has broke'. Two thousand people are abruptly in full flight, leaving their nearest and dearest to fend for themselves. As might be foreseen, the realistic and hard-boiled elements of the community are well to the fore of the sprinting multitude. Yet even now complete unanimity is not reached: even now, certain individuals remain intent on their private obsessions rather than face wholeheartedly the public danger of the broken dam. Grandfather believes the threat to come from Nathan Bedford Forrest's cavalry: brandishing a sabre, he dares them to advance. Inside a cinema, a woman who has always expected to be burned inside a cinema, shouts Fire! There is in point of fact no cavalry and no fire, nor has the dam broken; and what is more, even if the dam had broken, the waters would never have risen to that part of the town in which the panic is taking place.

For anyone, however well-meaning, who tries to chart a course through all the maze, Thurber reserves a special severity. Let your mind alone! he cries, and proceeds to annihilate a number of prominent experts in the art of mental guidance. One of these wishes us all to streamline our minds, giving various practical tips as to how this may be achieved. Thurber lets him ramble on awhile, airily dancing rings round him en route, and then, suddenly and forcibly, draws attention to the fact that in any case the world in which we are living is no place for a streamlined mind. A streamlined mind (as he powerfully illustrates) comes to grief if anything faster than the worried, confused little mind of Thurber and, by contagion, of his readers.

Again, few things in the annals of Freudian criticism can be more illuminating than his comment on Dr. Bisch. Dr. Bisch cites the case of a man who, finding a car bearing down upon him, havers this way and that and eventually runs headlong into it; and while not fully supporting the Freudian diagnosis that sex starvation was at the root of the man's trouble, Dr. Bisch does remark that an automobile bearing down upon you may be a sex symbol at that, especially if you dream it. Austerely Thurber replies that in his view, even if you dream it, it is probably not a sex symbol but merely an automobile bearing down upon you. And if it bears down upon you in real life, he is certain it is an automobile. Here, surely, is something pretty much like revolution. If once an automobile is to be an automobile and not a sex symbol, away goes the livelihood of any number of our contemporaries. Furthermore it reminds us—and how odd that we should have to be reminded—that the whirring, whizzing, squealing world of the machine age is infinitely more dangerous to the human being than anything



'All right, have it your way—you heard a seal bark!'

From 'The Seal in the Bedroom'
(all books published by Hamish Hamilton)

we get into the weird, wild world of Thurber's imagining, the more startling the resemblance it bears to the contemporary scene. At any moment we may encounter those malevolent gnomes of his, at the cocktail party, at the business conference, or by simply looking into a mirror. At any moment, someone will raise the cry 'The dam has broke!' and we shall be off, screaming, into the unknown. It is not, we gradually perceive, Thurber who is queer, but Dr. Bisch. Thurber's own dilemma, which he so vividly and horribly describes, boils down to this: he is a sane and civilised man, alive at the present time.

—Third Programme

Sonnet

Those sloped fields three years covered with the sea,
Exempt from harvest, yet bear prophecy;
Unshored their names, sentenced and gradual,
To the touch and blather of like seizures fall.
Though no rash tongue urgent with lust or anger
Troubled the drift and tenancy of air,
There fear's damp counsel I have heard unbound
To the doomed ear till deafness quell the sound.
Who would leave a name? Earth failing in no noise
To the salt curse, air's thin half-warning voice,
Seeds rotting in the ground they would believe,
I would leave a faith but find no faith to leave.
Thus were one preyed to the resort of prayer:
To the doom's self informing us, Our Father . . .

W. S. MERWIN

Forlorn Campaspe

Campaspe sought within the sacred grove
The bull, the boar, the eagle and the dove.
Gay-garlanded, encouraged by soft flutes,
Campaspe sang in praise of birds and brutes;
But they, indifferent to her friendly code,
Responded each in a more ancient mode.

Raped by the bull and ript-up by the boar
She dragged her bones into an hornbeam hoar;
The eagle found them usefully extended.

Then when Campaspe's agony was ended
The mild complaining dove was heard to say:
Campaspe much disturbed our grove today.

LESLIE BARRINGER

More Work in the Garden

By F. STREETER

DID you ever see the old pear trees more thickly covered with bloom than they are this year? Absolutely beautiful! And those lovely back gardens jutting on to the railway lines that show gardening at its very best; that piece of grass perfectly mown, and each lawn different: and then you come upon one neglected with nothing done. What a pity, and what a contrast: perhaps the soil is heavy clay. But I must get on.

Begin to get all your bedding plants thoroughly hardened off, with the exception of begonias, heliotropes, geraniums, fuchsias, and some of the most tender annuals recently pricked out: let these get nicely rooted first. But you can put out the hollyhocks. A few groups of hollyhocks in a garden are a sight worth seeing. If you raise them from seed every year you will not be troubled with the rust. Give hollyhocks plenty of room—a couple of feet between the plants is none too much—and have a group or two in the middle of the border, and perhaps a few fairly close to the front. You can then see what beautiful things they are, double or single.

Don't leave your gladiolus corms in the bag to shoot or in the shed to dry up, but get them planted now. Put these, too, in groups, with a little sand underneath each corm. These flowers are grown well in Scotland: there is a stationmaster up there whose gladioluses beat anything else I have ever seen. He gives them manure water, and how they love it! Get all the dahlias divided and planted. Give them something good, well underneath the roots, and they will more than repay you. But don't plant any young cuttings rooted this year yet: it is not safe when the growth is above ground.

Although wallflowers are only just blooming, it is time to sow seed for next year's display. That is the best of gardening: you are always looking twelve months ahead. Try to see a display of flowers in some of the gardens that are open to the public—or, better still, take a stroll in some of the parks: where there is sure to be a display of wallflowers. Look out for the varieties called Fire King, Blood Red, Orange Bedder, Cloth of Gold, and the fancy-coloured Eastern Queen. These wallflowers have a heavenly scent, and they are perfectly easy to grow. Sow the seed in shallow drills twelve inches apart, lightly cover the seed, and hoe between the rows when you can see the little plants peeping through. When large enough to handle, plant them out twelve inches apart, keep them clean, and you will have lovely plants for the autumn bedding. What a subject for the front bed, edged with forget-me-nots!

Just a word about polyanthus. When yours have finished flowering,

lift them and divide them: one plant will usually make three or four. Replant them in a shady part of the garden by the fruit trees, if you have got any. Never lift them and throw them under a shrub to eke out an existence. Plant them carefully a foot apart, and they will even try to flower for you this summer. Don't let them do that, but allow them to build up and grow into good stuff for putting out next October. It will pay you to look after these plants. But if you have no room to plant out and still would like a display, all you have to do is to sow a few seeds of a good strain in a box of sandy soil, prick them out when large enough, and there you are—simple!

Finally, here are a few quick tips. Get the weed killer on your paths and the salt on to the crazy paving. Lift any daffodils that have finished, and lay them in a trench in the back garden. Look out and clear any suckers away from the lilac bushes. Sow any grass seed on the lawns, and keep on mowing now: it doesn't matter about its being hard work!

—Home Service

V. B. WIGGLESWORTH, broadcasting in 'Home Grown', spoke of new chemical compounds used as insecticides. 'These substances', he said, 'are called "systemic" insecticides—because they get right into the system of the plant. Ideally they will kill the insects that are attacking the plant, but not those other helpful insects that are the natural enemies of the insect pests. One substance which has at least some of the required properties is called bis-(bis-dimethyl-amino) phosphonous anhydride, and this has been available commercially in this country for the past year or so. Unfortunately it is highly poisonous to human beings, so that it must be handled with the greatest care. Moreover it persists in the plant for a good many weeks. So if it is used on vegetables, for example, these must not be cut and eaten for at least a month or six weeks after treatment. In the present state of our knowledge it is open to question whether such a material is suitable for the home grower.

'Recently one laboratory has announced that it intends to put on the market shortly a new insecticide of this type. It is said to be much less poisonous to human beings and much less persistent in the plant. If these claims are substantiated, this insecticide may prove useful for the home grower. It would obviously be helpful to have something that you could just water on to your roses to keep them free of greenfly. Or something to water on your lettuces that would get at the aphids deeply hidden in the crinkled leaves which are so difficult to reach with ordinary sprays'.

Has the Motorist been 'Soaked'?

(continued from page 743)

given way to expediency as the basic principle of taxation, so far as the motor-car is concerned. They also doubt whether it would in any case cost so much as the Chancellor calculates, as many cars now laid up would be put on the road again and there would be a greater incentive to take out a full year's tax instead of for part of the year only, thus offsetting the loss. The Chancellor regards it as a 'slightly anomalous position', the motoring organisations call it 'rank injustice'. I think we can be sure of a lively debate on this point—as well as on the petrol tax and purchase tax—when the Finance Bill comes before Parliament during the coming weeks.

The history of motor taxation in this country has been a sad one from the point of view of motorists and motor transport generally. The original tax, you may recall, was the Road Fund tax introduced by Lloyd George in 1909, on the basis that the revenue from it would be entirely devoted to road improvement. This position lasted until 1926, when the movement began which has been called the 'raid on the Road Fund'. The raid has steadily developed into full-scale invasion so that we have now reached the point where—in the words of the

Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Transport—'the Road Fund is a myth'. Moreover, shortly after the first raid on the Road Fund, an enterprising Chancellor in 1928 also saw the possibilities of imposing a tax on motor fuel for the benefit of the general revenue and a petrol tax of 4d. a gallon was then introduced. This 4d. has now become 1s. 10½d.

The annual income from motor taxation as a whole will now exceed £250,000,000, all of which goes into the general revenue. The state's contribution to road expenditure is decided each year by Parliament, and at present it is little more than a tenth of that sum. When you buy a gallon of petrol, your 3s. 6½d. divides up like this: 1s. 8d. is the cost of the petrol; the remaining 1s. 10½d. goes to the general revenue, and of this about 2½d. is likely to be spent on the roads. And the roads are in a pretty poor state. Practically nothing has been done to them in the last twelve years beyond bare maintenance, while for every three vehicles on the road in 1939 there are now four. No wonder the surveyors are at their wits' end, and traffic delays are increasing. But what can you expect for 2½d?—Home Service

Towards 'The Cocktail Party'

The first of two talks by HENRY REED on the problems of dramatic writing

THE general attitude to what we are in the habit of calling poetic drama is a very strange one; it is an attitude that I heard expressed in its full and complete beauty one afternoon in a theatre after the first act of a performance of Mr. T. S. Eliot's comedy 'The Cocktail Party'. The curtain descended, the lights went up, and a lady in front of me turned to her companion, another lady, and said: '*I'm enjoying every minute of it. Are you bored?*' The reply I failed to catch; it cannot, I feel, have mattered much either way, for the question was more important than the answer.

Verse Drama and Literature

Ever since the body of our drama settled down into the medium of prose, a couple of centuries and more ago, there have, I imagine, been murmurs that a revival of verse drama is on the way, or is long overdue, or is taking place. And though we still cannot quite know what a revival of verse drama will be like, we do at last know some of the phenomena, hitherto unpredictable, that will attend such a revival. Among other distractions, the most important will be the attitude of the audience, the audience's feeling that in going into a theatre and listening to two and a half hours of verse it is doing something unusual or clever or whimsical or highbrow. The danger is that this attitude may persist for a long time: verse drama being regarded as a minor eccentric diversion, mostly enacted in places which provide every reasonable excuse for not going. It is in the wild hope of removing the subject for a brief space from this prevailing climate of indulgent interest, and of trying to see it in its proper place—as part of literature as a whole—that I have put together a few observations on drama in general, on its relation to other literature, and on its connections with prose and verse.

I do not myself want 'a revival of verse drama'; what I want is the restoration of verse to its dominant position on the stage, because only thereby can the drama, I think, regain a position where it will command the respect we normally accord to the novel and to the poetry printed in books. What most of us in recent years have wrongly wanted is bravely attired language on the stage; and this is not an essential component of poetic or verse drama. It is understandable that in reaction from the maimed and inarticulate interchanges that normally pass for dialogue on the stage today, we should applaud any attempt to use words in a different manner, regardless of whether we understand their meaning: but it may follow from this that we shall not mind if they *have* no meaning, and if the dramatic transactions behind them have no meaning either. It is necessary to remind ourselves that what we want in the theatre is good drama, from which great drama may eventually emerge; my aim will be to try to suggest that this may be impossible in England without the medium of verse.

I think that I can best approach the subject by beginning at the end and summarising my conclusions without any immediate attempt at persuasion. I can see that persuasion on some points may well be impossible; but I think there will be many who will agree with me when I suggest that during the two centuries and more in which prose has been the normal medium for English drama, the drama has never acquired notable stature. I believe that this is not an accident, and that the obstacles in the way of prose drama are more serious than is usually allowed; and that so far as one can reasonably conjecture ahead, those obstacles are likely to remain insurmountable. I further believe that in English only the use of verse on the stage can elevate the drama to a position where its achievements may be taken as seriously as those of the novel; I also believe that this elevation has been achieved with illuminating certainty and success only once in the last 200 years, in Mr. Eliot's 'The Cocktail Party'. I believe that the arrival of such a work either by Mr. Eliot or by anyone else has been seriously delayed by a misapprehension of the function of verse on the stage; and finally, something I hope may be thoughtfully considered by anyone contemplating the writing of a play, I believe that the verse drama must not be regarded as exclusively the prerogative of the lyric poet; and indeed that the initial practice and habits of lyric poetry may prove strongly deterrent or misleading to the verse dramatist.

These are opinions which in my mind group themselves round the problem of dramatic communication. I cannot try to pretend that they are undebatable. I have suggested that prose drama in this country has never acquired notable stature. Students of drama do not usually decline their attention on to anything else; but we are not similarly exempt and I do not think we discover anything important about drama if we regard it as something isolated from the general movement and development of our literature. In that movement and development there has always been a perpetual stream of lyric poetry: that stream, and that alone, has been unbroken. It is likely to remain so, and for a reason unconnected with its possible virtues and public accomplishments. In lyric poetry alone does the poet himself contrive to maintain the closest contact with the actual and aboriginal moment of ecstatic apprehension, and in lyric poetry alone can his emotion be concentrated in a way to bring an absolute contentment to himself. I am not suggesting that this is necessarily the effect on the reader, and certainly not that lyric poetry is the highest form of literature. But its production is independent of general taste. The drama and the novel have no such independence; they are consciously aimed at a large audience. And it is a curious fact that in England, though they have long co-existed, they have never exactly *flourished* together: I mean that there has never, so far, been a period where they have simultaneously reached a high state of accomplishment.

After the restoration; after the return of the exiled court from France; after the re-opening of the theatres; after the attempts at drama on French models or at recapturing the Jacobean afflatus: after all this, the great decline set in, with a dreary evanishment of poetry and deep feeling under the incoherent wastes of the prose comedy of manners and domestic life. Later on, a little above the general level, stands the small figure of Sheridan; we estimate his real smallness if we put him beside Jane Austen, in whom twenty or thirty years later the uprising novel found its first great artist; with Miss Austen the novel became the repository of the insight, the imagination and the understanding the drama had lost. For a century and more after her death, serious artists in prose turned to the novel: George Eliot, Hardy, Henry James, Conrad, others.

Experiences of Two Novelists

Verse drama had not of course vanished from sight, though it can hardly be said to have come into view; all the major poets attempted it, and some of their efforts reached the stage: Byron, Keats, Shelley, Browning, Tennyson. I shall have more to say of the reason for their failures in my second talk. More cogent to our investigation are the stage experiences of two of the novelists I have named, Henry James and Thomas Hardy. Their connection with the drama illuminates our problem far better than that of any of their professional contemporaries. If we had to rely simply upon the Victorian dramatists for our sources of study, we might simply dismiss them as men of second-rate perceptions and gifts; the root of the matter would thereby escape us, which is that the natural capacity of the prose drama may perhaps make it satisfactory only to men of second-rate perceptions and gifts. But the genius of James and Hardy was of the very highest order; one can think of no element in human consciousness that they had not the insight to understand and the talent to objectify.

James' relations with the theatre are odd and illuminating. He had a craving for popular theatrical success, he was a profound student and lover of the stage, and at several periods of his life he wrote plays. He was thoroughly satisfied with the stage-technique of his time and he had no wish to realign its limits. Of these he was at once a master: and it is a fact worth mentioning about the technique of any literary art, that you either possess it in a considerable measure from the start, or you never acquire it. It is a thing to be improved, perfected, modified, individualised; but it is never got at by a process of laborious learning. Stage-technique was child's play to James; yet his plays are utterly disconcerting in their ineptitude, dullness and lack of life; I cannot myself discover even the refinement and delicacy of expression which

Shaw so generously praised on the disastrous first night of 'Guy Domville'. The one play in which we get some of the power of the real James is his dramatisation of his own novel *The American*. Dramatised novels are rarely an artistic success, but I do not think it is merely a previous acquaintance with the touching novel of *The American* that makes one see virtues in the play. The play does not compare in richness with the novel itself, but James came to its composition equipped with an already profound certainty about his characters; he knew them in a way he was never to know the people he created immediately for the stage. Even so the stage-characters of 'The American' are but shadows of their originals.

Hardy's Doomed Play

Hardy's brief contacts with the drama are even more sharply illuminating. Unlike James, he had no interest in writing for the theatre, and he certainly had little technical aptitude for it. But pressure was brought upon him to dramatise *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* shortly after its appearance as a novel, and with some reluctance he made a play of it. The length and complexity of this novel's plot make it quite intractable to modern stage treatment; it is doomed as a play from the start. Even the other two stage versions of it that exist, by much more expert playwrights, Lorimer Stoddard and Mr. Ronald Gow, reveal no more than a shadowy token of the original work. But what one might expect is that at least the character of Tess herself might emerge with something of fulness and vitality. Even in Hardy's own version this is not the case. And in each of these versions whenever the original dialogue of some of the famous scenes is preserved, it comes to us, divested of Hardy's commentary, as through a fog.

The points that emerge from the relation between James and Hardy and the stage are points so crude and simple that they may at first be disbelieved. I am a little reassured by the fact that novelists who have essayed or contemplated the drama have told me they agree with what I am about to say. The drama depends on dialogue alone; dialogue is only part of the novelist's equipment, and his profounder effects may not necessarily be got in that way at all, even when he is dealing with the same sort of people and subject as the dramatist. The novelist has in fact every conceivable prose resource for rendering the precise modulations of feeling and the subtlest changes of character, above all those temporary changes of character that issue in significant action. He has this partly because he has whatever amplitude of space his action reasonably demands. The dramatist has not this power of lateral expansion; his medium is short in time and he gains nothing in extending it very much. He does start with some things given him that the novelist has to create; atmosphere, setting and the physical reality of the characters: for these the dramatist can depend (perhaps a little dubiously) on the lighting, the settings and the actors. Beyond that he has only the words the characters exchange with each other: and if he is to move us with the depth and the complexity and the richness of a great novel, he has to compress all these qualities into the words uttered by his characters. And however much he eschews triviality, he has few words in which to create his effects. I think that the prose drama, as we know it, shows that in fact his effects are remarkably limited.

Nevertheless they are real effects and we must examine what the prose dramatist can do that the novelist cannot do better. The dramatist can assuredly do farce or melodrama quite as well as the novelist: in neither of these is much of his energy—that is the number of words he is allowed—drained away in the exploration or elucidation of character. He can dispense with character in the interests of plot or of farcical situation.

The other kind of play in which prose may succeed is the reverse of this: the play where little or none of the verbal energy is drained off in action and plot, the play where these are virtually dispensed with and we are left to the undistracted contemplation of character and some generalised impression of the quality of life. This type of play exposes the dramatist to the most hazardous risks; I know of only one dramatist who has successfully practised it: Chekhov. And it may well be that Chekhov's achievement is destined to remain unique.

Chekhov gives us his people; and he gives us the mood that embraces them: a generalised mood with limited but effective shifts of feeling; plot or action he brings down to an irreducible minimum: it is just about enough to persuade us that the end of the play is a conclusion. I know of no prose dramatist with a tenth of his power to move one, none that has created people that so surely insist their way into one's memory as terms of reference. It is interesting that he is equally respectable as a dramatist and as a story-writer: it is the same conscious-

ness, the same mind and the same procedure apparent in both. It is not too much to see in the best drama of Chekhov a novelist's implicit protest at the normal commerce of the stage. He seems to say to other dramatists: 'You keep on insisting on artificially contrived coils of action, and life meanwhile escapes you: *this* is what existence is like'. His plays are not as they are by accident: they are not failures at something else or makeshifts for something else. He has always the completest self-possession about what he is doing.

He has, it seems to me, an immeasurably finer aesthetic awareness than Ibsen. Ibsen is particularly valuable for our purpose, since he was a magnificent poetic dramatist who abandoned verse for prose. It is not only its length that makes 'Peer Gynt' an expansive and penetrating work; it is the basic facility of Ibsen's verse, which enables him to encompass a wide and varied sweep of feeling and mood. And this is starkly abandoned in the series of celebrated prose plays on which his reputation mainly rests. These plays had, and were intended to have, great social significance at the time of their writing: this has vanished, leaving large areas of many of the plays in a state where it is impossible to take them seriously. The plays themselves are always marvellous technical constructions; but no such machines remain in perfect working order for ever, and already I think we are aware of certain creaking noises in his habits of retrospective narrative. The great sensational theatrical moments of revelation still have undeniable power; but it is only in such moments that the characters come to life, and it is usually only a female character that comes to life. This is partly due to an almost irreparable defect of temper in Ibsen himself; for some neurotic disposition gave him an extraordinary loathing for his own sex; and I cannot believe that whole tracts of Norwegian manhood can at any time have been as contemptible or imbecile as Ibsen shows them. They strike one as not worth contemplation. But that is only part of the problem; what turns the plays into largely empty machines is the inhibition that prose lays upon him. He has abandoned a sharp and delicate instrument of discovery for a blunt one, and is obliged to prod obscurely at the surface of his material without discovering anything beneath the surface. The revelations of the past which accompany the present current of the drama are only a device giving an *illusion* of depth; the stuff is dragged up, and we therefore assume it has lain deep down; the text itself rarely reveals any depth to be there.

Progress of Ibsen

His later progress is very remarkable. The *reductio ad absurdum* of his method is found in the play of 'Hedda Gabler', where idleness, weakness, villainy and absence of mind conspire to produce a brilliantly glittering action of almost wanton pointlessness. 'Hedda' is followed by a group of plays which are often described as poetic. The first of them is 'The Master Builder', whose hero is a vain and ageing architect, Solness, menaced by the advances of the younger generation. Ibsen had grown fond of a habit the prose dramatist may easily fall into; that of trying to establish an artificial poetic focus for his play by the employment of some allegorical symbol. And 'The Master Builder', with its symbolism of the ageing Solness killing himself in an attempt to climb his newly erected tower and hang thereon the wreath of the youthful temptress Hilda, seems to me a work intolerably unconscious of what it is doing.

But the next play, 'Little Eyolf', is a different matter, or at least it becomes so once the first act is over, and little Eyolf himself and his crutch and the Rat-wife are out of the way. For the remaining characters are only four in number and only two in importance; and the last two acts dispense with plot and are mainly a series of duologues leading to a reconciliation. This minimal action clearly leaves Ibsen a great freedom here; and—though this is a dangerous impression to state of a play known only in translation—the manner of dialogue seems to me to have undergone a change from the preceding plays. The speeches in these plays never extended to great length; and here, in 'Little Eyolf', they have become so short that there is almost established a rhythm; this play is *almost* in a simple and primitive verse. And I think this enables Ibsen to discover possibilities in Allmers and Rita inaccessible to him hitherto. I find it in every way the most revealing of Ibsen's later plays. My feeling is perhaps a subjective one, but that feeling is that Ibsen, after a long and barely profitable journey, had re-approached his early state, the condition of verse, and had found in it a greater capacity for discovery and thereby for understanding and sympathy than he had known for many years past. It is the wandering Peer returning in advanced age to find the blind Solveig singing joyfully and courageously in the places of his youth.—*Third Programme*

The Sea-Mists of the Winter

By WYNDHAM LEWIS

IT became evident quite early that it was going to be a deplorable winter. The cold was unvarying, it had purpose it seemed. Usually in a London winter it forgets to be cold half the time; it strays back to autumn or wanders dreamily forward to spring, after a brief attempt at winter toughness, perhaps squeezing out a few flakes of snow. But *this* winter though it experienced its usual difficulty in producing anything but a contemptible snowfall there has been an un-British quality, an unseemly continuity.

Speaking for myself what struck me most was the veil of moisture, like a sea-mist which never left my part of the town. I remember first remarking this just before Christmas. I said to Scott, my journalist-newsagent-friend, that these perpetual mists must slow him down in the morning; he drives up to business in his car, from his home in the outer suburbs. He did not seem to mind a light sea-mist, for he shook his head absent-mindedly. Another time I was talking to him over the magazine counter of the shop and indicating the street outside, with its transparent film of blue-grey. I protested, 'Another mist!' He looked out and said, a little sharply, 'There is no mist'. I did not argue, I supposed that he meant it was not up to the specification of what he called 'a mist'.

But you may have seen through my innocent device. The truth is that there was *no* mist. The mist was in my eyes: there was no sea-mist in nature. In spite of conditions which, one would have supposed, would have made it quite clear what these atmospheric opacities were, it took me a considerable time to understand. It was not, you see, like this that I had imagined my sight would finally fade out. 'You have been going blind for a long time', said the neuro-surgeon. And I had imagined that I should go on going blind for a long time yet: just gradually losing the power of vision. I had never visualised mentally, a sea-mist.

In such cases as mine there always arrives a time when normal existence becomes impossible, and you have to turn towards the consultant who has made a specialty of your kind of misfortune. When I started my second portrait of T. S. Eliot, which now hangs in Magdalene College, Cambridge, in the early summer of 1949, I had to draw up very close to the sitter to see exactly how the hair sprouted out of the forehead, and how the curl of the nostril wound up into the dark interior of the nose. There was no question of my not succeeding, my sight was still adequate. But I had to move too close to the forms I was studying. Some months later, when I started a portrait of Stella Newton, I had to draw still closer and even then I could not quite see. So I had to have my eyes examined. This was the turning-point, the date, December 1949. What, in brief, is my problem, is that the optic nerves, at their chiasma, or crossing, are pressed upon by something with the pleasing name of craniopharyngioma. It is therefore a more implacable order of misfortune than if I had a jolly little cataract. There has been a great acceleration of failure of vision during the last seven months or so. Of course I was told that I should first lose my 'central vision' which would mean that I should no longer be able to read or write. Already I was obliged to read with a magnifying glass. Then I found that I could no longer read the names of streets, see the numbers on houses, or see what stations I was passing through on the railway. About that time everything except banner headlines was invisible: then I found I could no longer read the letters inside the finger-holes of a telephone-dial. At present, if I wish to dial a number, I count the holes with my fingertips until I reach the opening where I know the letter I have to locate is situated. Thus seven is P.R.S., five is J.K.L. I know what letters the holes near the beginning and end of the half-circle contain, and what the figures are as well.

As to typing, it is some time ago now that I ceased to see distinctly the letters on the keys. I still write a certain amount with a pen or pencil, but I write blind. However much I write on it, the page before me is still an unsullied white: and sometimes the lines I have written distressingly amalgamate. The two books on which I am at present working, one a novel, the other an art book, will proceed quite smoothly, but the method of their production will be changed. A dictaphone, or

'recorder' as the Americans call it, will supersede the pen or the typewriter, at least as far as the first stages of composition are concerned. Many American writers I am informed employ the recorder, although possessing ordinary visionary powers.

As to the sea-mist, that is now too pretty a name for it. Five or six weeks ago I still went to my newsagent to have a talk with Scott and make some purchases. He of course would move about as a fresh customer would come in and demand attention. At any given time I found it extremely difficult to decide whether he was there before me or not, for he would come back and stand silently near me, and often it was only because of the tobacco he was smoking, and a slight movement in the mist before me, or at my side, that I knew that he had returned. Recently he has told me that he realised that half the time I did not know he was there. I went to other shops as well, as long as it was possible: but when for me the butcher became nothing but a white apron, and the skinned back of a bullock protruding, as it hung, seemed to me a fleshly housewife, I ceased to be a shopper. Now I take my exercise arm-in-arm with some pleasant companion, and it is surprising how easily one can thread one's way in and out of the shadowy pedestrians, very slightly steered by another but sharp-eyed person.

Sometimes I am still at large solo, though increasingly rarely. I may go out, for instance, and some twenty yards away look for a taxicab. In these cases I will stand upon the edge of the pavement, calling imperiously 'Are you free?' to owner-drivers, who probably observe me coldly from behind their steering wheels as if I were the Yonghi-Bonghi-Bo. I signal small vans, I peer hopefully at baby-trucks. At length I get a response. It is a taxi! But I assure you that it is one thing to hail a taxi-cab, another to get into it. This is quite extraordinarily difficult. I try to force my way in beside the indignant driver. He or I will open the door. But as I see everything so indistinctly I attempt to effect a passage through the wood of the door itself, in Alice Through the Looking Glass fashion, rather than take advantage of the gaping hole in the side of the taxi produced by the opening of the door. It is with a sigh of relief that I at last find my way in, after vainly assaulting the stationary vehicle in two or three places. This I realise must be extremely difficult to understand for a person with rude eyesight and piercing vision.

The failure of sight which is already so far advanced, will of course become worse from week to week, until in the end I shall be able to see the external world only through little patches in the midst of a blacked-out tissue. On the other hand, instead of little patches, the last stage may be the absolute black-out. Pushed into an unlighted room, the door banged and locked for ever, I shall then have to light a lamp of aggressive voltage in my mind to keep at bay the night.

New as I am to the land of blind-man's-buff I can only register the novel sensations, and not deny myself the enjoyment of this curious experience. It amuses me to collide with a walking belly; I quite enjoy being treated as a lay-figure, seized by the elbows and heaved up in the air as I approach a kerb, or flung into a car. I relish the absurdity of gossiping with somebody the other side of the partition. And everyone is at the other side of the partition. I am not allowed to see them. I am like a prisoner condemned to invisibility, although permitted an unrestricted number of visitors. Well, Milton had his daughters, I have my dictaphone.

This short story of mine has the drawback of having its tragedy to some extent sublimated. Also, we have no ending. Were I a dentist, or an attorney, I should probably be weighing the respective advantages of the sleek luminol or the noisy revolver. For there is no such thing as a blind dentist or a blind lawyer. But as a writer, I merely change from pen to dictaphone. If you ask, 'And as an artist what about that?' I should perhaps answer, 'Ah, sir, as to the artist in England! I have often thought that it would solve a great many problems if English painters were born blind'.

And finally, which is the main reason for this unseemly autobiographical outburst, my articles on contemporary art exhibitions necessarily end, for I can no longer see a picture.

Art at the South Bank Exhibition

By FRANCIS WATSON

THESE is no 'Hall of Art' on the South Bank. In the end this may be more important than the single contribution of any artist. Specifically aesthetic festivals are elsewhere, at the New Burlington Galleries or the Tate or in the L.C.C.'s enclave of sculpture at Battersea. There the challenge 'Do you call this art?' may ring out with all its old bewildered fury. At South Bank it dies, or should die, on the lips. For we do not call it art, we simply scatter it about. The eyes that appraise Mr. Cobb's racing-car on the podium of the Dome of Discovery may next rest unwarily upon Miss Hepworth's carvings close by, without, as it were, changing focus. Before one has asked 'Is it art?' the formal and narrative elements in a decoration may have done their work. In the case of Victor Pasmore the gallery-approach is so completely eliminated that even the undirected admirer, and probably nine-tenths of all the others, will pass the black and white ceramic design on the east wall of the Regatta Restaurant without realising that those abstract whorls and whirls can raise (on a canvas, in a frame) passionate controversy.

Before dining at the Regatta one might have taken lunch at the Turntable Café, with Julian Trevelyan's gaily appropriate still-life decoration and a solid and reposeful carving by Anna Mahler which suggests what even popular garden-ornaments could be; and a cup of tea with Ben Nicolson and Reg Butler at the Thames-side Restaurant downstream. The Nicolson mural shows good manners towards the building it introduces, and Mr. Butler's wrought-iron 'Birdcage' is so easily overlooked in the stress of self-service that one would have liked to see it in the Sussex forge at the Country Pavilion. Finally at the Regatta, supposing Mr. Pasmore's free calligraphy to have been missed, there is a lesson in organic patterns provided by John Tunnard's mural and an interesting exhibit of the application of crystal-forms to commercial design.

Yet the questions, it seems, still bob up; and the *Manchester Guardian* has reported a pained 'Whatever it's for I can't imagine' from a visitor confronted by the aluminium fountain (or Water Mobile as the official list rather horribly calls it) between the Sea and Ships Pavilion and the river. Whether this delightful device by Richard Huws is art, or design, or craftsmanship, or mechanical invention does not trouble me any more than it would have troubled Leonardo or John Evelyn, but it is manifestly for something. It is for tipping water in and out of graduated receptacles with a sound that brings the breaking sea among the maritime exhibits and keeps the children dragging at their parents' hands to wait for the big one. And it is good to look at. The other prominent ornament of River Walk, Siegfried Charoux's monumental 'Islanders', supplies that contrast of the ponderous with the airy which is a feature of the Exhibition. But like the gigantic hand clutching the cornstalks in the Country building it seems a little too close for comfort to the totalitarian style of Exhibiutionism.

The Dome of Discovery, where the temptation to turn over the ceiling to some modern Tiepolo has been resisted, harbours in its interior maze two murals, a composition of large rhythms and simple tones by Keith Vaughan and John Minton's story of exploration, which answers its purpose but is less well organised than one might expect

from the painter of the smaller Jamaican mural in this year's Royal Academy. The connected theme in the buildings north of the Dome opens impressively with Graham Sutherland's large painting 'Origins of the Land'. This is given the exceptional concession of isolation, somewhat as the Sistine Madonna was set aside for exclusive inspection at Dresden; and both the risk and the opportunity of this presentation are accepted with Mr. Sutherland's complete assurance. Further on in the story Josef Herman's mural 'Miners' is well worth mentioning; but the large Country Pavilion has so much activity—hens laying, smiths at the anvil, tractors (for some reason) moving vertically—that the artist becomes a scene-painter, and Leonard Rosoman's reticent back-cloth should be judged in that light. More exciting is Michael O'Connell's painted curtain of agricultural business that goes on and on behind it. Downstream neither Feliks Topolski nor John Piper are seen at their best in two large outside murals, where both in their different ways appear mannered, but in that barnful of happy conceits called the Lion and Unicorn Edward Bawden's screen of English life, admirably adapted to its theme, is in no way strained to fill its generous space.

There remain (though so much has to be passed over) the unattached and labelled works of sculpture. Frank Dobson's seated figures have a dignified air of belonging to their site outside the permanent Royal Festival Hall, and there are three works specially commissioned by the Arts Council. Of these Mr. Epstein's springing bronze of 'Aspiring Youth' is, of course, splendidly modelled; but something (in the pose, no doubt) seems to mark it down as an Exhibition piece, which the new works of Mr. Moore and Miss Hepworth are not. The Moore 'Reclining Figure', sited outside the Country Pavilion, marks a return to the classical feeling of earlier work. Superbly weighted and balanced, it shows Moore's mastery of the equal use of space and mass and the unimpaired and unexploited vitality of our most celebrated (and perhaps busiest) sculptor. Miss Hepworth's vertical 'Contrapuntal Forms' take on a peculiar interest between the Skylon and the Dome which may not be what she intended, for her abstractions spring from an organic impulse and a sensibility to landscape. Her chosen conception is expressed in stone with a finished craftsmanship and on a scale which compels at least physical admiration. Whether it will achieve the popularity of Andromeda's 1851 *danse-du-ventre* for the sea-monster or Hiram Powers' Greek Slave slowly rotating in her bower of crimson plush is another matter. But Miss Hepworth's abstract form near the Thames-side Restaurant can also revolve. It seems a pity that it has no colour.



Epstein's 'Aspiring Youth' sculpture, now on view on the South Bank

The Listener's Book Chronicle

The Big Show

By Pierre Clostermann, D.F.C.

Chatto and Windus. 12s. 6d.

IN NINETEEN-FORTY-ONE Pierre Clostermann joined the Free French forces as a fighter pilot. He spent most of the war with the R.A.F., rose to the command of a Wing, and shot down twenty-three enemy machines.

The Big Show, based on his diary, invites comparison with *The Last Enemy*. Hillary's book is in essence introspective: the unfolding of a personal attitude. Clostermann's is almost entirely a bare record of action. It is the scheme of things that interests him rather than his own place in it. As to that, it suffices him to quote Saint-Exupéry, 'We are the playthings of universal incoherence'. There is nothing of the Grand Design about the air war as he describes it. He assaults our complacent impressions of 'Allied air supremacy' with scenes of chaos, waste, frequent stupidity of command, only redeemed by the enduring readiness of the pilots, weary, without hope for themselves but strangely exalted by their destiny.

Like Saint-Exupéry, Clostermann found an escape from the 'universal incoherence' in the mystic loneliness of flight, the new world of the sky into which he could soar to find a temporary escape. He does not hesitate to recall the air battles as nightmares in which, eaten alive by fear, he often 'lost all notion of what was going on', flying only by reflex. But often he would climb out of the fight to find himself suddenly alone. 'All was mine, the light, the sun; and I thought with calm pride: all this is shining only for me'.

His escapes were many and miraculous. Hundreds of other men pass through the story, almost all to die. He makes us feel their presence and their loss but—perhaps because of his philosophy—does not pause to invest any of them with character. On the other hand he describes his machines, Spitfire, Typhoon and Tempest, in such detail, sensuous as well as mechanical, that we become aware of their individualities as if they were the native animals of his chosen element.

His account of the last months of the war in Europe comes as a shock. There was no slackening of resistance but a climax to the nightmare. The dwindling British squadrons, their pilots almost burned-out (on one occasion the Medical Officer, who had been giving Clostermann benzedrine to keep him going, found that he had lost seventeen pounds in a fortnight), were faced by German squadrons equipped with the finest machines of the whole war, amply supplied from underground factories impregnable to bombing, based on brilliantly-camouflaged airfields, supported by an anti-aircraft corps of such skill and numbers that the British pilots lived in mortal fear of 'flak', and fighting with unprecedented fury now that they had been forced back within their native frontiers.

Allied casualties increased. New men were killed before they could learn how to fight. 'On the 20th March in the morning the duty Anson had brought us four Sergeant Pilots and one Warrant Officer. The last of these five new recruits got himself killed on the 23rd'. Five days before the German surrender Clostermann, with twenty-seven machines left out of the ninety-five that should have made up his command, led his surviving pilots on a final mission. Thirteen of them returned.

Five nights later the survivors sat in the Mess, listening-in to the roar of the crowds celebrating

victory in Paris and London. Someone threw a bottle at the radio set. One by one the pilots walked out of the silent room and went to bed.

Peter the Great and the Emergence of Russia. By B. H. Sumner.

English Universities Press. 5s.

Historical scholarship has suffered a severe blow by the death at an early age of the author of this book, B. H. Sumner, for he was, beyond any question, the most eminent by far of English scholars in the field of Russian history. Indeed, this little book, written as an introduction to the subject for the general reader, illustrates the depth and range of Mr. Sumner's mastery. For none but a master of his subject could have distilled the essence of the reign of Peter the Great of Russia into so short a space.

In some 200 pages Mr. Sumner has compressed an admirably thorough and clear account of the successes and failures of Peter. Though Mr. Sumner regarded it as misleading to say that the Great Northern War was the real progenitor of the new Russia, his book does bring out the fact that Peter's first aim, the assertion of Russian power in Eastern Europe, implied breaking through the Swedish-Polish-Turkish encirclement, and thus necessarily involved war; and that nearly all Peter's early reforms were designed to improve the conduct of that war and to exploit the fruits of victory. Only in the latter part of his reign was state reform undertaken for its own sake.

That Peter was not a complete innovator is now generally accepted. His reign represents a speeding up of a process which had already started. Westernising trends were at work in Russia and Peter was strongly influenced by them in his boyhood. His subsequent journey abroad served to consolidate in his mind the need to borrow western techniques if Russia was ever to become a power to be reckoned with. Unfortunately for Russia, Peter's strictly utilitarian outlook led him to borrow only that which he thought could be of immediate, practical use. That western technical achievement was only one aspect of western cultural development escaped him. His reforms in education bred engineers, navigators, shipbuilders, technicians of all kinds, but no statesmen.

The speeding-up process showed visible results during Peter's lifetime. By the end of his reign Russia was a Baltic power, equipped with a navy; her military tradition was established. She had a new heavy industry and her foreign trade had quadrupled. Administration and finance had been reorganised. But the price paid was the extension and consolidation of serfdom, and the establishment of the class of hereditary landowners more and more estranged from the peasantry. A consequence of this artificially hastened growth was the part necessarily played by the state in all walks of life. Peter would probably have tried to dispense with much cumbersome bureaucracy had he had the support of a sufficient number of people able to carry out his plans. But he suffered from being in advance of his country. What he wanted for his people they did not yet want for themselves. Bureaucracy, closely supervised by the Emperor's agents, the procurators and fiscals, stifled all independent initiative. Moreover, any effort to create an active independent civic life was doomed to failure so long as the Emperor himself stood above the law and gave the example of arbitrary exercise of power.

To the eighteenth century Peter was a great hero, an outstanding 'enlightened despot'. During the nineteenth century, when Russians began to analyse their own history and their relations with Western Europe, his reign gave rise to endless discussion between those who held that Peter had traced Russia's true path, and those who believed that he had betrayed the indigenous Orthodox civilisation of Muscovy. In a short book Mr. Sumner had no space to go into this controversy, on which so much hinges that is relevant to Russia today. His own view seemed to be that Peter himself had no desire to break with the Muscovite historical past, and that if such a break occurred the fault lies rather with Peter's successors than with him. Peter's main social principle, that the nobility and gentry must serve the state in exchange for their economic security, was undoubtedly abandoned by his successors, who thus fundamentally altered the character of Peter's state reforms. But Peter himself must be blamed for the tempestuous but injudicious energy with which he poured new wine into old bottles.

A Celtic Miscellany

By Kenneth Hurlstone Jackson.

Routledge and Kegan Paul. 18s.

This is a modest title for a work of considerable scholarship: for *A Celtic Miscellany*, Professor Jackson has made some two hundred and forty new translations from the poetry and prose of the six Celtic languages. In his preface he takes up the question of what Celtic literature is *not*; and points out how remote it is from the bogus Macpherson, from the so-called 'Celtic Revival' of the end of the last century, and from the dim 'Celtic Twilight' of the early Yeats. It was in his old age, in fact, that Yeats wrote bare, simple poems that are much closer to early Irish poems than anything he ever wrote. Celtic literature is, as this book so clearly shows, realistic, racy, and passionate in its imagination and sincerity. These Celtic writers, particularly the earlier ones, have, too, the 'innocent eye': in most of the poems and passages of prose in *A Celtic Miscellany* there is a direct freshness of approach that constantly delights.

The nature poems bring home to us the hard life of early, isolated communities; and a common theme is the longing for the end of the dark winter and for the coming of spring. Winter is described with an intensity that only a poet who had experienced bitter winters in harsh conditions could feel, as in these lines by the fourteenth-century poet Dafydd ap Gwilym:

... wind to strip the trees, and chilliness, and struggle with the wide-enfolding frost and fierce hail, and rousing of the tides, and cold, and tawny floods in the brooks and high roaring in the rivers, and days angered and wrathful, and sky gloomy and chill with its darkness hiding the moon.

Except in a very few cases, Professor Jackson has made a literal translation of the poetry into prose, and although this method does mean that one can gain little insight into many devices of poetic technique in Celtic poetry, it has the advantage of giving the reader just what the poet said, without the distortion, however mild, that is often involved in verse translations from any language. One can still see in translation the concentration of emotion in these lines spoken by an old man:

Wooden staff, it is Autumn, the bracken is red, the stubble is yellow; I have given up what I love.

Professor Jackson has made blank verse translations of two passages from the famous Irish satiric poem 'Midnight Court' by Brian Merriman: they read more vigorously, roughly and racily than the same lines in Frank O'Connor's rhymed version of this poem.

There is fine narrative prose in the hero-tales and adventures which have a Homeric quality and must have been written in a similar state of society. A grotesque element appears in some of these tales, notably in the passage from the eighth-century Irish 'The Voyage of Mael Duin', where the voyagers 'saw another island, on one leg, that is, a single leg held it up'. There is also a terrifying description of Hell, with long chains of magnificently appropriate adjectives.

One can only touch here on the wealth of interesting material in *A Celtic Miscellany*. The book does give the reader an opportunity 'to judge what the Celtic literatures are really like'—from the mourning dignity of the 'Lament for the Four Macdonalds' (Scottish-Irish, 1636) to the robust satire of 'Midnight Court'; from earliest times to the eighteenth century.

Greek Terracottas

By T. B. L. Webster.

King Penguin Books. 3s.

That unhappy word *Kleinkunst*, beloved and misused by so many writers, aptly describes the ancient craft of terracotta, where the artist as well as the work of art is small, where original creations are rare, and masterpieces scarcely to be found. The reason lies largely in the medium, which if it does not forbid at least discourages tense forms and sharp detail, allows reproduction—and debasement—of a single original in large numbers by a simple process, and calls for completion with a coat of gaudy paint. Add to this that the customer usually wanted something cheap and bright, and it is not surprising that the general quality was low. Yet there are many exceptions, not only among terracottas of large size (which, with architectural terracottas, are, to limit the subject, wisely excluded) but among the ordinary statuettes which come within the scope of this book. The reader will want to know how these were made, and he will find a brief but clear account of the technique. He will want to know what dictated the choice of subjects, which are various, and range from a monkey riding on a donkey to Aphrodite crowning a terminal figure of Dionysus: in his explanation Professor Webster rightly avoids the word *genre*—unless the note of praise on the dust-cover be his—and shows how one was a toy, another a household image, a third dedicated in some shrine as a thank-offering or an inducement of divine favour, a fourth made to accompany and to solace the dead. He writes in an easy and sometimes charming style: once or twice—but only once or twice—he assumes much more knowledge of the history of Greek sculpture than ninety-nine per cent. of his readers are likely to possess; but this will not hurt them, and it will help the archaeological student.

The new series of King Penguins sponsored by the Hellenic Society, of which this is the first, will in fact serve a dual purpose, like the classical Penguins and Pelicans to which it forms a logical extension; and will render, as

they have, a service to humane studies by spreading and deepening knowledge. It is to be hoped that other volumes equally well written and with illustrations equally numerous and well chosen, on other, major arts, will follow quickly. Meanwhile, there was no harm in starting with terra-



Two women on couch, from Myrina. Late second century. Height 8 ins. British Museum

From 'Greek Terracottas'

cottas, of which everyone knows something and few anything precise. The aesthetic emotion they arouse may be modest, and most of them are hardly to be mentioned beside the best work of contemporary die-engravers or gem-engravers, whose scale was smaller still. Yet in our attempt to recapture the Greek world it is in certain moods easier to conjure up a vision of some small rustic shrine, with clay-tiled roof and wooden columns, hung with these simple, gaily-painted offerings, than one of the Parthenon, that glittering intellectual exercise, surrounded by masterpieces of marble and bronze, and thronged with those unique Athenians. We cannot walk always upon the heights.

The Autobiography of Arthur Machen.

Richards Press. 15s.

This title has been given to *Far Off Things* (1922) and *Things Near and Far* (1923), now conveniently printed together. Machen was born at Caerleon-on-Usk in 1863 and died in 1947. The son of a country clergyman and at various times a journalist, an actor, and a man of independent means, Machen was essentially a writer and was properly conscious of his vocation. These autobiographical writings are a proof of it. He did not think of literature as a career but as a destiny. The impulse to write came to him early. It was like a revelation or a conversion, and through all his vicissitudes he remained faithful to it. Though a minor and hardly a successful writer, he was destined and real.

His appeal is far from universal. 'Vital literature', he believed, was something remote from Maupassant. He carried the burden, the nebulous burden, of what he chose to call (with a head-on collision of dental letters) 'Celtdom', and he was not quite free from tushery and the relaxing influence of 'faery'. Though his conception of his role remained thaumaturgic, his life had sunk at times to Gissingesque depths of poverty and loneliness. He kept, and later destroyed, a diary of 'the bitter days of Clarendon Road, a record

of struggles and starvings and desolations'. He knew what it was to live mostly on bread and tobacco and green tea, to wander through the streets of London unregarded, for months and months treading 'a grey labyrinth whose paths had no issue, no escape, no end'. He knew what it was to live alone in a little room, and 'how terrible it was on a gloomy winter's evening to go out because the little room had become intolerable'.

Had he been second-rate, he would have preserved that diary and its self-pity. A lesser man, having bitterly learnt that to take pains was to be rewarded with 'the malignity of scoundrels and the insults of fools', might have roosted for the rest of his days in a well-founded persecution mania. But Machen kept his balance and his saving and quasi-mystical sense of wonder, which functioned even on grey winter afternoons in the purlois of the Clerkenwell Road.

The pleasantly discursive reminiscences of this unworldly man have an easy charm. They show how firmly rooted he was in the 'land of Gwent' which early enchanted him and gave him strength for the long metropolitan years. They have merit as an indication of the life of a man of letters of a surely now extinct sort. As a self-portrait they are reticent, but it is restful to read between the lines for a change—especially between lines so carefully composed. They thoroughly deserved reprinting and should make new friends and refresh old ones.

Reservations. Poems by Valentin Iremonger. Macmillan. 6s.

Moving Day. By P. A. T. O'Donnell. Fortune Press. 6s.

For ten years or more, with no encouragement to speak of, except the Æ Memorial Award of 1945, Mr. Iremonger has been playing his little game of *jeu de quilles* in a corner of Ireland. He now comes forward, in this his first published volume, as a writer of an assurance and poise and technical brilliance which any poet must admire. It is not that Mr. Iremonger is concerned to say anything. He contrives to leave the impression that the less he can possibly say, having excited his reader's attention and curiosity, the better. The meaning is in the art which is the poem. He therefore presents an interesting contrast to the large number of English authors of verse who are doing their best to say as much as they possibly can, and throw it all with an air of the utmost profundity in the teeth of the non-reading public. Let us take, as an example of Mr. Iremonger's rarity, one of his beginnings and ends:

Elizabeth, frigidly stretched,
On a spring day surprised us
With her starched dignity and the quietness
Of her hands clasping a black cross.

With book and candle and holy water dish
She received us in the room with the blind down.
Her eyes were peculiarly closed and we knelt shyly
Noticing the blot of her hair on the white
pillow...

Next morning, hearing the priest call her name,
I fled outside, being full of certainty,
And cried my seven years against the church's
stone wall.
For eighteen years I did not speak her name

Until this autumn day when, in a gale,
A sapling fell outside my window, its branches
Rebelliously blotting the lawn's green. Suddenly,
I thought

Of Elizabeth, frigidly stretched.

This is one of his best 'lines', making the fantastic or macabre as matter-of-fact and indifferent as possible: like 'Elizabeth frigidly stretched', who looks, from one angle, a quite approachable waxwork, but, in every other sense, is not. In the contrary manner of 'A Pane of Glass', or a splendid piece called 'Underworld', Mr. Iremonger can keep his nose beautifully to the ground, can describe something so astonishingly ordinary that you wonder how you never came to describe it in the same words, since they are so clearly, so exactly, the right words. And there is the lucid self-analysis of 'The Guilt' to suggest that his sometimes slightly mannered detachment appropriate to the title *Reservations* is more than a pose. There is also, to show it a strength, the firm variation of line and rhythm of 'Clear View in Summer'; or the conviction of imagery in 'Shadows':

Locked in the cupboard on the top landing
For sure there are dragons, rampant and terrible,
And what horrible gnomes, over and under the

bed,
Menace the unconscious hours with their bald
shrieking.

Little boy, little boy, learn to be alone,
To grasp courage like straws and float on your
fear
With the relaxed wariness of the swimmer, trained
To watch the threatening wave and the deceptive
current.

For, in the banquet-hall, at the gay reception,
Walking at night with your girl-friend or alone in
your room,
You will have terror, like days, with you all the
years of your life
And, among the tall strangers, none will under-
stand.

'Let us resolve, then', says Mr. Iremonger elsewhere, 'to have no truck with anger or apathy': and this, as far as it goes, is his wisdom, his 'message'. It should go a very long way. It is a much more hopeful start for a poet than many more elaborate politics. It is a counsel of patience, and that is what Mr. Iremonger will need if he is to advance. He must be encouraged to persevere and ruthlessly reject his failures, for he is a writer of considerable gifts. Mr. O'Donnell looks thin and youthful beside Mr. Iremonger, but deserves a mention in his company for some successful little wartime verses slightly recalling Siegfried Sassoon, and for some equally successful drawings. Mr. O'Donnell's example is a useful hint to those who despair of selling poetry neat.

Shaw. By Desmond MacCarthy.

McGibbon and Kee. 12s. 6d.

Sir Desmond MacCarthy, by collecting a lifetime's critical work on one author, has provided a volume which must take comparison with Shaw's own *Quintessence of Ibsenism*, but this critic of Shaw is less of an open champion than was the critical Shaw on behalf of his Norwegian hero. With coolness, as well as enthusiasm, Sir Desmond's journalism carries us down the years and through the changing facets of Shaw's dramatic method. G.B.S. began as the ideological jester, spontaneously brilliant, marrying the theme to the wit, and moved on to be the ideologist who had become so immersed in his philosophy that he only threw in jests as rather obvious light relief for the tracts which his players had to recite.

The critic's notices, as they cover this development, show the care and the courtesy, the insight of mind and the clarity of style that one would expect from Sir Desmond, who was for many

years as happily engaged in the theatre as he was with a book in his study. A final memoir pays especial tribute to Shaw's tolerance of criticism; certainly, he had to put up with folly enough in his time and even with cheap misrepresentation and abuse; but from the start he had the intelligent and upright judge in Sir Desmond, and he would have been stupid indeed to resent such analysis of faults as are here included with the appreciation of the unique, abiding merits.

The Cambridge History of Poland: to 1696. Cambridge. 42s.

It was three years before the last war that the Cambridge History of Poland was planned. To say that events of the following years made the production of such a history vastly more difficult, would be an understatement: they also caused the need of it to be more urgently felt. It is almost ten years since the appearance of the second volume, which covered the modern period from the end of the seventeenth century: and now the first volume has been published, and the actual narrative is complete from the dim origins to the time of Pilsudski. An important part of the whole scheme, however, still awaits completion: for the two volumes published quote almost no sources and give practically no references. A concluding volume, a bibliography, is still to come and, it is safe to say, is likely to be to specialists and historians in general the most important part of all. To general readers—at least, to those of them who will face some 1,200 pages of pleasant enough type bound in two handsome volumes—what has appeared will give sufficient matter, on a subject hitherto very inadequately covered in English, and generally very partially in other languages.

The story is not simple, for the history of Poland is not confined to any one clearly marked area, nor does it concern only a single and homogeneous people. True, there is a recognisably Polish core, both of soil and of people: but the Lithuanian Duchy, the Cossacks of the Ukraine, the towns with their Magdeburg constitutions and, often, actual German colonists, the Hungarian and Saxon kings—all these illustrate the marginal complications which form the rich and confusing pattern of the story. To make a single whole of it would seem to demand a single author or, at the least, a plenipotentiary editor. The plan of the present work, with its two English and two Polish editors, has the merits expected of a distinguished team of specialists, but, it must be admitted, at the cost of a certain loss of unity and even of a certain amount of overlapping, especially in the earlier sections. There are times too when the painstaking narration of gains and losses in obscure dynastic campaigns becomes hard to read: and among the kings and battles it cannot but be felt that one's curiosity about the social and economic life of the people—what it really meant to be a vovode, a lesser landlord or a peasant—often goes unsatisfied. None the less, in its vast scope and its soberly objective attitude, this history is an immense advance on anything hitherto available, and the best general survey that is likely to be seen for generations.

The present volume, then, takes the story from the racial origins of the Polish people, soberly and unmythologically surveyed in a short opening chapter; through the conversion to western Christianity, the period of German influence and the fourteenth-century expansion; past the rise and ebb of the Reformation and the troubled days of Swedish, Russian and Ukrainian campaigns; to the picturesque climax of Sobieski's liberation of Vienna (where such details as Prinz Eugen and Turkish coffee are austere omitted); and just begins the period of anti-climax in which the eventful reign ended.

In the course of the story are inserted chapters to deal with social, constitutional and cultural aspects of the different periods. These chapters are of interest in themselves, and valuable as a kind of pause for breath: but their position makes the reader look uncomfortably both backward and forward from the point reached in the narrative, and the question arises whether most of this matter (and perhaps even more of it) might not with advantage have been made an integral part of the story, even at the expense of some details in the intricate political kaleidoscope.

In a co-operative work repetitions on one hand and inconsistencies on the other cannot—indeed, probably should not—be altogether avoided: but there cannot have been, as is stated, two separate first instances of the use of the *Liberum Veto*; the two accounts of the origin of the Gniezno Archdiocese, if not in actual contradiction, at least leave very different impressions: and Lismanini, 'a Franciscan monk [sic] and private confessor of the queen', scarcely needs this repeated introduction at his third appearance. Some minor discomfort is caused to the reader by the vagaries of place-names and even of personal names: to wander from Sigismund Augustus, for instance, through Zygmunt August, back to Sigismundus, will hurt no-one: but it would help the unwary if Kijów were in the index, or else Kiev on the map. A little *Gleichschaltung* in these matters would have done violence to no contributor, and variants could have been confessed in preface or index.

The few illustrations, pleasant in themselves, and two very slight maps, seem scarcely adequate to the scale of the text: and in the choice of pictures a view of one or two of the earlier Gothic buildings of Cracow, for instance, or of some of the native timber structures, would have dispelled any possible delusion that Polish art began with an imported Italian Renaissance.

Of the editors and contributors, death has taken a sadly heavy toll during the preparation of the history, and much of the source-material must have perished since work began. In the circumstances, it is a notable achievement, of which the total value overshadows many unavoidable, and perhaps some avoidable, minor defects. The early publication of the promised bibliography is much to be desired.

The Post-War Financial Problem and Other Essays. By F. W. Paish.

Macmillan. 15s.

Of Professor Paish's collection of twelve essays, all reprinted from other publications, only five have been written since 1945. The others are of interest, and in some cases of very great interest, to students of economic history and of the history of economic thought, rather than to readers concerned with the economic problems of the post-war period. Even the later essays are to some extent already out of date, for in them Professor Paish makes estimates of the dimensions of Britain's economic problems in the immediate post-war years, and his forecasts have been overtaken by events. But the basic problems, e.g. the allocation of productive resources between the rival claims of consumption, capital formation, exports, and defence, have not changed, and Professor Paish's lucid statement of the issues involved and his suggestions for dealing with them are very relevant to the situation which rearmament is bringing about today. In 'The Economics of Rent Restriction' Professor Paish surveys the complex and anomalous conditions created by successive instalments of legislation to control house-rents, and with characteristic enterprise suggests a means for re-introducing some order and equity to this field.

CRITIC ON THE HEARTH

Comments on B.B.C. programmes by independent critics

TELEVISION*

Hits and Misses

LAST WEEK'S CEREMONIES marked another stage in the growth of television as a social influence. Viewers were heard talking in public places, in trains and buses, with a new note of respect for what the technical experts had accomplished and of wonder at what the future may hold. That has not happened before at quite the same pitch of general appreciation. It probably produced more purchase-tax grumbling than any event since the Budget.

The service at St. Paul's and the opening of the Royal Festival Hall gave us television masterpieces. Again and again we had the sense of being privileged ticket-holders, sharing in privacies from which even many of those present were excluded. The pictures of royal persons, and particularly the progress of the King and Queen up the great nave of the cathedral, were the best of their kind so far seen on our screens. Some viewers of the proceedings at St. Paul's may not have caught the King's gesture of relief as he took his place in the State landau for the return drive. It was edited out of the telefilm version shown in the evening, as indeed was much of the intimate quality of the direct transmission. Many no doubt cherish their memory of the Queen's smile of greeting to viewers during her visit to the exhibition of the Royal School of Needlework at St. James's Palace earlier in the week. Its spontaneous friendliness was delightful.

At the Royal Festival Hall the telescopic lenses enabled us to see the two conductors through orchestra eyes, Sir Adrian Boult, persuasively firm, his baton elegantly stirring up the waves of sound, Sir Malcolm Sargent crouching and springing like an archer with a flashing target and an unerring aim. Among remembered shots were those of Sir Adrian Boult joining in some of the chorus recitatives with a sort of bland beanfeast enjoyment as he conducted.

Carried away by the sublimities of Handel and Purcell, we were disconcerted when the camera obtrusively picked out from the galaxy of personalities a well-known politician and exhibited him to our gaze for the second time during the evening. This showed a disproportion which the subject of it would be the first to condemn. It was just a little bit silly. It ought not to have occurred on such an occasion. But the most churlish



A still from the film 'Henry Moore: Sculptor', which was televised on April 30



Television camera photographing the arrival of the King and Queen at the South Bank on May 4; and, left, the Queen with Earl Spencer in the Throne Room at St. James's Palace, looking at some of the exhibits arranged by the Royal School of Needlework



encompassed that spectacle, too, with great efficiency, keeping us visually informed of practically every move in an exciting game. Also recalling pre-Festival programmes, there was the excellent contribution to 'Picture Page' in which Gerald Moore told us about his work as accompanist of singers, great and small. He did not simply talk to us from the piano stool. He attacked us with his experience. He did not appear on the screen: his personality filled it. This was among the most successful personal appearances in recent television.

There is no fake humility about that Mr. Moore; and why did television drip with it in its traffic with his namesake, the sculptor? This Mr. Moore has his place in the context of art in our time, but he does not completely dominate it, nor did he suggest by word or deed in the programme dedicated to him and his productions that he is the repository of any such notion. The implication came from television when at the end, in subdued homage tones, it expressed its gratitude to him for facilities provided, and so on. This was courteous nonsense. Moore has the nose lines of a man of independent spirit and assuredly he can have no fancy for such undergraduate genuflections. His experiments with line and form are the expression of a peculiar power. It was both instructive and interesting to hear at first-hand his exposition of purpose and method. But it was all much too solemn. One felt that the producer of the programme had taken off his shoes before entering Moore's studio.

The programme of Shakespeare research and discovery called 'The Hidden Years' has some of us punctually attendant on our sets, eager to miss none of it. The result was disappointment. The antiquarian-bookseller on whose investigations the programme rested had a very good story to tell and in his own fashion he told it well enough. The visual support he received was not worthy of the opportunity his labours had so painstakingly yielded. Who wants to see the birthplace all over again, the tomb and monument, the school, the mansion, all that old familiar impedimenta of the history books? Certain inserted shots of printed matter with their mysterious annotations and blottings-out were of undoubted interest. But it was not the picture side that kept the programme going. The thing was defective in conception, inciting guesses

critic could not maintain that television failed in its duty to the viewers in a notable week. The weather alone seems to have been to blame for the comparatively poor results of the programme in which Richard Dimbleby took us on an evening tour of the South Bank.

Somewhere away beyond one's memories of the Festival crowds there is a blurred picture of the vast assembly at the Empire Stadium for the Cup Final. Television

* Mr. Reginald Pound in this article covers outside broadcasts and programmes of an informative character. Next week Mr. Harold Hobson will write on a fortnight's plays and other entertainments

about how much emigration there is from sound broadcasting to television. It is not statistics one is curious about, not personalities, but influence. The two systems are not complementary in any interchange of producing experience. Can it be that so obvious a consideration has no weight yet in the planning of some television features? The essence of 'The Hidden Years' was conveyed to us by sound, making unimpressive use of those old-fashioned radio tricks, alternating voices. This programme could have been a first-rate demonstration of the documentary role of television. It ought to have inspired a brilliant script.

REGINALD POUND

BROADCAST DRAMA

Cabbages and Kings

ON A FRIDAY when the weather was what Frenchmen insist it always is in London, the great and good ones of the land repaired through dark and drizzle to the South Bank. Others, for a change, sat at the bottom of Wagner's Rhine watching 'The Ring' begin to roll; others shuffled round Burlington House. The season was on. But radio critics stayed at home to hear a long, new historical play by James Forsyth, 'Adelaide'. They should have felt—at least—uplifted by a sense of virtue and discovery. Do we not need long, new historical plays on the air; do we not need and cherish Mr. Forsyth, who is apparently one of the few to deal in this line? Mr. Forsyth has made a large contribution already. We have had Villon and, was it Cellini? Or Leonardo and . . . But here something seems to go wrong with one's memory. It is like the list of the operas by the late Jules Massenet, you would swear you could rattle them off pat but when it comes to the point they have all somehow conglomerated and one can only think of some unpronounceable generic name for the whole lot.

I won't say I was disappointed. Would I rather have been at the Festival or the Academy? Well, the piece may not have been as original or gay as the South Bank, but it had, I thought, much in common with the kind of picture one still finds at the Royal Academy. There were good passages; excellent workmanship; 'radiogenic' ideas (a few), much that was touching, picturesque or interesting. The central portrait grew the longer one attended (though it vanished entirely when an end came, I found). The bystanders, who are so often more attractive than the central figures in R.A. canvases, were drawn most realistically (which is more than you can say for some of them festival murals!). It would be unfair to complain that one could have done with some of Mr. Shaw's bouncing high spirits and dialectic or with Shakespeare's cunning (learnt for a stage without scenery or artificial lighting) in making us 'see' with our mind's eye. Mr. Forsyth is not a genius of that order. But there is solid worth in his play all the same and it was done with great loyalty.

The other interesting things of the week were in the Third Programme, though I do not say this in disparagement of the Home Service people whose 'Golden Boy' (a famous fable from the tough and tearful world of boxing, Jewish *immigrés* and violin playing) was excitingly done; whose 'Macbeth' honours these festival weeks and who, on Saturday, gave Gladys Young, for her jubilee, a gorgeous outing as 'The First Mrs. Fraser'. It is simply that the Third did us better—even with its experimental pieces like R. H. Ward's 'The Westward Journey' which took one of Goethe's meditations as a point of departure and ruminated about the fate of man, body and soul, with Mr. Sofaer as a bit of both, Ivan Samson to ask all the ques-

tions, and Alan Wheatley and others to know none of the answers (as they wittily say about another programme). This may have struck some people as pretentious metaphysical moonshine but I found it continuously interesting and something which can only be done by the radio or the screen (which would never do it).

Gide's 'Oedipus', in an excellent translation and a performance which if not exactly blazing with talent was at least assured and able to make the point, was an hour well spent. It is 'Oedipus' as a didactic fable rather than as drama. The notes of tragedy—even allowing for the cooling effect of transmission through the sightless air—are not sounded and not meant to be. But as a reiteration of the Gidean wisdom 'Know thyself' it is of great efficacy and even of—strange word—charm. (That scene of overhearing the children, for instance.) I have often found it hard to pay proper attention to Gide's fictions and illustrative fables (as opposed to the instant excitement of his notes and jottings). I was glad to have it 'voiced' for me. Mr. Sofaer again gave a good performance. Michael Goodliffe sounded convincing. Some small parts were well done. Donald McWhinnie produced.

PHILIP HOPE-WALLACE

THE SPOKEN WORD

1851 Continued

I HAD MORE TO SAY and no room left to say it last week on the Third Programme's revival of 1851; in fact I did little more than give my impression of a small group of Early Victorians as they appeared in single excerpts from their writings, and I said nothing of how some of them sounded to a modern ear when translated by the B.B.C. For translated they were bound to be if read aloud in character. What the listener hears in such broadcasts is the author's words, but not his tone and manner of speech. Tone and manner are simply what the reader or producer fancies them to have been, and I believe that the Duke of Wellington and Carlyle, if they had heard the broadcasts of themselves, would each have muttered in the words of Bottom: 'I see their knavery; this is to make an ass of me'.

The Duke, lightly spoofed as he was, was admittedly very good fun, but I don't for a moment believe that, even at the end of his life, he was quite the humourless old buffer that he sounded on the air. Language is a misleading thing: what appears to be the comical ponderosity of the Duke's letters to Lady Salisbury is simply the usual epistolary style of the period, just as the delicious prunes and prisms of Jane Austen's dialogue was, in her day, the ordinary terms of polite conversation. It is the passage of time which has caricatured them for us and so it is a mistake, when reading them aloud, to superimpose a vocal caricature upon them. In reading Carlyle on the opera at the Haymarket John Laurie did not, I think, intend to caricature him, but he succeeded in doing so by enormously over-accenting the emotional content of the written word. And surely Carlyle had already sufficiently caricatured himself in that deplorable article.

But many of the readings gave us the text undistorted. Raf de la Torre, for instance, read Kingsley's sermon as an eloquent speech or sermon might be delivered today and Cathleen Nesbitt spared us a supposititious George Eliot and read her *straight*. Both, consequently, gave admirable performances. I return you now to 1951.

I cannot claim to have listened to all the impressive ceremonies which ushered in the Festival of Britain. A sample here, a sample there, is all that the sensitive critic, listening in his small room, can stand of proceedings which

take place in vast surroundings among vast crowds. The confused noise, for example, of the huge audience and the electrifying fanfares of trumpets in the Royal Festival Hall were far too impressive and exciting to be tolerable for more than about twenty seconds, but in my spasmodic visits to the scenes it struck me that the commentators did their job admirably and showed commendable restraint in their use of that dangerous part of speech, the adjective. Both Wynford Vaughan Thomas and Audrey Russell gave me a most vivid impression of the brilliant scenes in the Royal Festival Hall.

On Friday afternoon I heard the recording of 'The Critics' whom I had heard also on the previous Friday. This is a programme which varies as much as the English weather: dull, middling, bright intervals—you never know what you are going to get. But on these two occasions I struck, as they say, lucky. The team was an exceptionally good one and I especially enjoyed Raymond Mortimer on Park Lane and Alan Pryce-Jones on Ivy Compton-Burnett's new novel, and the discussions that followed. Myself a glutton for Miss Compton-Burnett's brand of caviare, I found the gastronomic dialogue on *Darkness and Day* with Messrs. Pryce-Jones, Reed and Anstey as the Gourmets, Mr. Ivor Brown as General, and Mr. Mortimer as Gourmand extremely good listening. Miss Compton-Burnett broadcast in dramatic form would be a fascinating experiment, but the job would have to be done with superhuman tact.

MARTIN ARMSTRONG

BROADCAST MUSIC

Festival Hall

THE OPENING OF LONDON'S NEW CONCERT HALL just ten years after the destruction of Queen's Hall was an occasion of such importance as to warrant the desertion of the critical chair by the hearth in favour of a hardly won seat at Waterloo. Listeners, who should also be concert-goers, may reasonably wish to know what the hall, built at such great expense and designed with so much scientific care, is like as a place for making and hearing music.

Science has certainly won a signal triumph. The acoustics are perfect. One can hear everything that is going on in a complex score, and woe betide the player who goes wrong! A straying flute in Elgar's 'Pomp and Circumstance' showed up like a red light on a black night. This is no place for slovenly playing.

But a concert hall is a musical instrument, not a scientific laboratory for the production of theoretically optimal vibrations of sound. It is like a violin, and no careful imitation by metric measurements has ever produced a violin equal to the products of the Cremonese craftsmen; still less has any substitute scientifically designed to produce an ideal violin-tone supplanted the 'Strad'. The old Queen's Hall, by hit or by miss, was an excellent place in which to hear orchestral music. It had not the perfect acoustics of the Royal Festival Hall, but perfect acoustics can, as we found last Thursday night, make some music sound perfectly horrible.

The special acoustical feature is that when a player has ended a note, that note falls dead. It is cut off sharp, and has no after-reverberation. The result is that, especially in music which is at all sharply accented, the various strands fail to blend into a coherent texture. We can hear all the parts, but they do not add up into that greater whole which we recognise as beautiful orchestral tone. Broad flowing music—the singing of the 'Old Hundredth' with orchestral accompaniment—sounded lovely. So, in the programme of British music which followed the service of dedication, while Sir Malcolm Sargent

had all the fun, Sir Adrian Boult with the solemn melodies scored most musical points.

The defect of the hall showed up most clearly in the Hallelujah Chorus, where the organ produced a toneless bumbling that sounded quite detached from the bass strings. Indeed the bass suffers throughout, for the famous recitative at the beginning of the finale in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony had no roundness of tone, and even Mr. Norman Walker's bass lost the resonance we know it has—I imagine because the acoustics do not favour the upper partials. Perhaps it was

for this reason, too, that the horns, usually prominent in the orchestral texture, and other middle voices were less audible than one would expect in a hall where one is so close to the music that anything about a *forte* becomes a painful noise. Fortunately, we are told, the hall can be 'tuned' within limits. It is to be hoped that the limits include a great increase in resonance. And what of the programmes? The first week seems to have been designed by some celebrity-minded person or persons, whose main idea was to engage the most famous conductor

in the world and to play for safety in the choice of music. What other country in the world would have inaugurated a great national festival with so little of its own music?

During the week not one of our younger composers was represented. We still have to look to the B.B.C. to give us a chance of rehearsing Racine, Fricker's stern, unbending Symphony, which was coupled last week with the new and more human Prelude, Elegy and Finale included in Trevor Harvey's interesting programme.

DYNELEY HUSSEY

Janáček and Jenůfa

By RICHARD GORER

'Jenůfa' will be broadcast at 7.45 on Saturday, May 19, and 7.35 p.m. on Sunday, May 20 (both Third)

THE recent meritorious production of 'Katya Kabanova' at Sadler's Wells has made it clear that, at least so far as the professional critics are concerned, Janáček's aims and ideals are still unappreciated. As we shall be celebrating the centenary of his birth in three years' time this seems rather odd. When I refer to the critics I do not mean those gentlemen who are starting on a career of journalism from what is rather unkindly called the bottom; rather do I mean those magistral figures whose dicta are pontifical and who, one hopes, have some general idea of what they are talking about. As far as Janáček was concerned this hope has in many cases proved to be vain. Thus we find one gentleman writing that Janáček's vocal line is weak and fussy. There can obviously be no objection to critics contradicting generally held opinions. If they can present reasoned arguments by all means let them prove that Beethoven's symphonic treatment is amateur, that Bach's counterpoint is rudimentary, that Berlioz's orchestration is unoriginal or that Janáček's vocal line is weak; but they should at least show some awareness that the contrary opinion is the more generally held. This particular critic was evidently unaware that to those acquainted with his work Janáček is regarded as a master of vocal declamation and it is doubtful if such ignorance entitles one to instruct the public.

I do not know if this ignorance is widespread or merely confined to a few, but in any case it can do no harm to start our consideration of 'Jenůfa' with a consideration of the composer's principles. 'The natural rhythm of the language and the intonation of the spoken word should determine the melodic curve of the music'. This simple statement has caused considerable misunderstanding. It does not mean that the vocal line should approximate as closely as possible to normal speech. Although comparisons between Janáček and Mussorgsky are hard to avoid, the Moravian could not have had much sympathy with the theories of Dargomizhsky. Indeed his approach to music, as opposed to the methods he employed, had much more in common with Verdi or Puccini: that is to say that the drama must be expressed by purely musical means and that the singing voice is the most expressive of all instruments. Thus if he considers that the expression will be heightened by giving more than one syllable to each note he does so to the destruction of any preconceived theories of realism.

Janáček's mind though complicated was singularly lucid and he can never have thought that opera was an art form to which realism was applicable. His constant notation of vocal inflections and natural sounds was regarded by

him in the same way as a painter regards his sketchbook. Judging by his practice Janáček's pronouncement means exactly what it says and no more. Although it has an air of originality it is in fact a commonplace. Auber started his career by imitating Rossini but the character of the language brought him to writing music that seems to us typically French. 'I Vespri Siciliani' is a failure not because Meyerbeer was an unworthy exemplar, but because his methods were incompatible with Italian words. It must be remembered that Janáček said this at a time when musical nationalism was still regarded as a departure from the norm. It was regarded as possible to be either a 'good' Czech composer or a 'bad' cosmopolitan. Janáček showed that so far as vocal music was concerned the alternatives did not exist and also that his methods were conscious where others were instinctive.

The melodic curves being thus determined, there remain the problems of harmony and organisation. To the eye Janáček's harmony appears completely chaotic, though it works out satisfactorily in performance. This is due to his employment of the modes and to his moving rapidly from one key to another without the usual preparatory modulation. Owing to the fact that he spent considerable time collecting Moravian folksongs, it has been assumed that the composer was influenced by them. No one has yet indicated any folksong that is at all reminiscent of a Janáček composition and when he writes in the 'folk' style, the result differs from his ordinary style—as the song in Act I of 'Jenůfa' will show. Nevertheless it is true that unlike the majority of Czech folksongs, which are diatonic, some of the Moravian songs are modal. It is thus possible that Janáček's use of the modes came from his study of folksong, but it is equally possible that it came from his experiences as a chorister at the Augustine abbey at Brno. He himself explained his partiality for the modes on the ground that they kept the tonality fluid. Although he liked a basic underlying tonality he did not wish it to be too clearly defined and he felt especially that the relationship between the leading note and the tonic was too precise and a form of the scale that did away with this emphasis gave, in his opinion, greater possibilities for emotional expression. Sometimes his employment of the modes leads to unnecessary complications of notation. The song that Števa and the chorus sing to Jenůfa in the first act is in E major, but Janáček chooses to regard it as being in the Lydian mode transposed to B. He therefore gives the B major key signature and negatives the A sharp whenever it occurs. Still in the main with his use of the modes and his rapid deviations into remote keys Janáček does obtain a fluidity without the static

quality that pertains to more deliberately chromatic music.

His organisation of the material varied slightly for each separate opera but the fundamental basis is constant. It is, in essence, an extension of the scheme of the Mozartian finale; each scene has its own material which is developed in a manner that may loosely be termed symphonic and once this material has been so developed it is discarded. Leitmotifs are rare, never employed in the Wagnerian manner and only rarely in Smetana's fashion. The voices are employed as *concertante* instruments, bearing the most important parts of the work, but always a part of the whole. Sometimes the orchestra and voices carry the same melodic line, sometimes, as in the scene between the Kostelníčka and Števa in the second act, the orchestra will contradict what the voice is singing.

'Jenůfa' was composed between 1896 and 1903. It had been preceded by 'Šarka', composed in 1887 though not produced until 1925, and the one-act 'Počátek Romanu', produced in 1894. Both these works are unprinted, but 'Šarka' is occasionally performed and is comparatively conventional. 'Jenůfa' shows the composer's style fully formed. Later operas will show an increased freedom in the orchestration and will illumine other facets of Janáček's personality; but there will be no further progress, only further accomplishment. In listening to 'Jenůfa' it must be remembered that Janáček was a dramatist as well as a musician. The characters are all peasants. The emotions by which they are racked—fear, love, jealousy and pride—are universal, but their reactions to them are conditioned by their environment. To express this Janáček employs a deliberate naivety and a suggestion of the folksong idiom that is found in this opera alone. I do not know if Janáček was justified in assuming that peasants experience emotions in a comparatively uncomplicated manner, but he justifies this assumption musically.

'Jenůfa' was performed at Brno in 1904 with moderate success. It was not produced at Prague until 1916 when it was given on the insistence of one of the directors after having been twice rejected by Kovařovic, the conductor of the opera, who subsequently made handsome amends. This production transformed the composer, then over sixty, from an obscure provincial composer to the leading musician of his day. Incidentally there is no point in feeling resentment against Kovařovic, who was a serious musician, even if somewhat conservative. Janáček's scores even now look so unconventional that it is safe to assume that were a new one to be discovered and the name of the composer suppressed it would be rejected by all opera managements.

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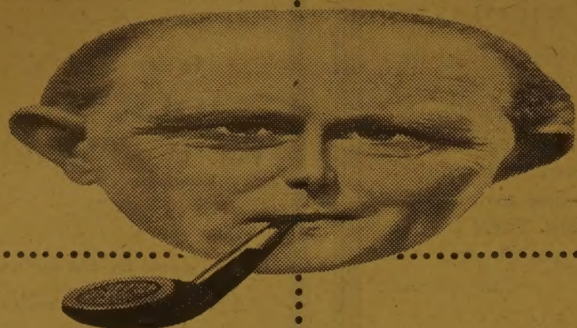
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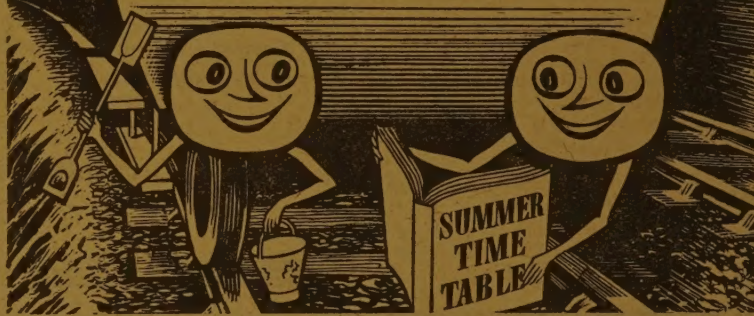
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ITALIAN VEGETABLE PIE

FOR THE FILLING for this pie, put in a greased pie-dish $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of sliced mushrooms lightly fried with a dozen spring onion bulbs. Add 1 cup of cooked peas and $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of quartered, peeled tomatoes. The tomatoes keep the pie moist.

For the top, which is not pastry but a savoury semolina, stir 2 oz. of semolina into 1 breakfast-cup of milk over simmering heat. Stir till thick—about 2 minutes. Remove from the heat and stir in 2 oz. of grated cheese, a pinch of salt, a grating of nutmeg and a small knob of butter.

Spread this over the vegetables, dot with butter, scatter breadcrumbs and grated cheese on it, and bake in a moderate oven for about 25 minutes.

IVAN BAKER

WAR ON THE MOTH

Any day now, a moth may begin egg-laying. But, luckily for us, we can take quite simple precautions which will destroy these new-laid moth eggs. First, they can be shifted by brisk brushing with a stiff clothes brush. And the special places to brush are the quiet dusty nooks on clothes put away after the winter: trouser turn-ups, under coat collars, and so on. If you can possibly manage it, give stored clothes an occasional blow in the air and bask in the sun: sunshine is a perfect death ray to moth eggs and grubs.

Remember that dusty fluff collects in the angles of shelves and cupboards: and (where there are fitted carpets) in the angle between the floor and the wall. You can rootle this fluff out with an old knitting needle or a skewer—and burn it in case it is full of moth eggs. Where carpets are concerned, have a care for

places under furniture which is not often moved, particularly modern furniture which sits flush with the floor. Carpet under a bed is another danger point: here it needs regular brushing or vacuum cleaning to keep the moth at bay.

You can use an insecticide, in liquid or powder form: you need one with DDT and pyrethrum in it. But this stuff has to touch the moths or the grubs before they can be killed: and even then they may take a long time to die. It is no use scattering so-called moth preventives around, or puffing now and again with a spray, and thinking that now you are moth-proof. The most effective chemical to use against moths is paradichlorobenzene: you buy it in crystal form from the chemist. It gives off a pretty powerful vapour which kills eggs and grubs. If you want to store clothes safely, do them up in a brown paper parcel with plenty of crystals crushed and scattered inside. Then make sure the joints are airtight to keep in the vapour. You could do this in a trunk, a suitcase, or a cardboard box—anything, so long as it is airtight when it is shut. Paradichlorobenzene is also useful if you have to treat a piece of furniture for moth—an armchair, say. You can crush the crystals to a fairly fine powder and scatter it over the chair: push plenty of it down the sides and the back. Then cover the chair right over, to make a sort of tent (an old tent ground sheet makes a fine airtight cover). You want a good overlap on the floor. Then you can arrange a line of books round your tent to act as a seal. The crystals need about a week to do their job. And this ought not to be done in a room where anyone is sleeping. If any vapour leaked out it might give a human being a slight headache. If you should get a moth patch on a carpet, cover it with a very damp cloth, and press with a hot iron. That will sterilise it.

'Woolly bear' grubs are hairy, brownish, oval-shaped things, about a quarter-of-an-inch long when they are in their prime, and they have the same tastes in food as moth grubs. The treatment for them is the same as for moth.

RUTH DREW

Some of Our Contributors

R. C. TRESS (page 741): Reader in Banking, Currency and Public Finance, London School of Economics

K. L. KELLY (page 743): Assistant Secretary of the Standing Joint Committee of the R.A.C., A.A. and R.S.A.C.

E. H. CARR, C.B.E. (page 747): Wilson Professor of International Politics, University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1936-47; author of *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917-23* (Vol. I in 'A History of Soviet Russia'), etc.

EDWIN MUIR, LL.D. (page 753): Warden of Newbattle Abbey College, Dalkeith; formerly Director of the British Institute of Rome; novelist, poet, and author of *The Structure of the Novel, Essays on Literature and Society, Transition, The Story and the Fable* (autobiography), etc.

REV. A. R. VIDLER, D.D. (page 754): Canon and Librarian of St. George's Chapel, Windsor; executive officer of the Christian Frontier Council; editor of *Theology* and co-editor (with Philip Ma'et) of *The Frontier*; author of *Christian Belief, God's Demand and Man's Response*, etc.

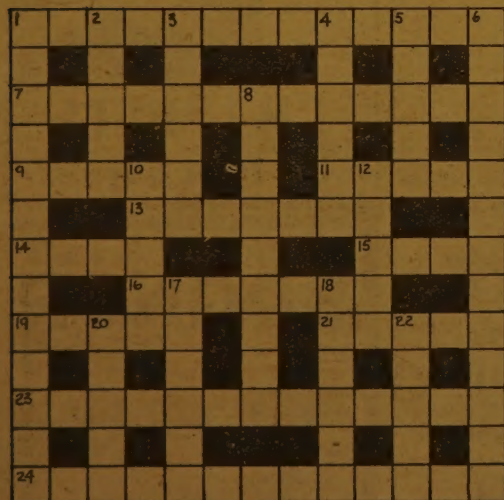
HENRY REED (page 763): radio dramatist, poet and critic; author of *A Map of Verona* (poetry), *Moby Dick—A Play for Radio*, etc.

Crossword No. 1,097.

A Djintec Puzzle translated by Vectis

Prize (for the first five correct solutions opened): Book token, value 12s. 6d.

Closing date: First post on Thursday, May 17



An interesting race, the Djintecs, with many quaint characteristics. To quote one: the women are taught, almost from birth, to say exactly what they mean while the men say just the opposite. The Djintecs maintain an exceedingly high standard of education, but only comparatively recently have they been taught to write in the 'orthodox' style; the older generation still pursues the ancient style (right to left; from the bottom to the top of the paper).

A family, when asked to contribute to THE LISTENER, set to and produced the following puzzle. The mother compiled twice as much as her husband, the daughter twice as much as her brother, and the word then remaining was supplied by the father.

ACROSS

1. He can discern the character of the mind from the features of the face (13). 7. Huge (13). 9. The savour of cooked food (5). 11. Musical time (5). 13. A book in which landed property is registered and described (7). 14. Distant (4). 15. Consequently (4). 16. Uncurl (7). 19. A kind of book (5). 21. An Italian town—birthplace of Anselm (5). 23. A genus of composite of many species, and natives of all countries except Australia (13). 24. Pertaining to dictionaries (13).

DOWN

1. In the manner of words that can only be read forwards (13). 2. Vividly (5). 3. To make insecure (6). 4. Unadorned (6). 5. A doctor of Mohammedan Law (5). 6. A musician—in a tinkinnabulous kind

of way (13). 8. A town, noted for its sporting associations (9). 10. Musically fast (5). 12. Bowed (5). 17. Pertaining to the ribs (6). 18. Freestones rough from the quarry (6). 20. Technically known as $\text{Na}_2\text{B}_4\text{O}_7 \cdot 10\text{H}_2\text{O}$ (5). 22. The two curved pieces of wood or metal in the harness of a draught horse to which the traces are fastened (5).

Solution of No. 1,095

Prizewinners: Mrs. R. M. Fricker (Dartford); D. P. M. Michael (Whitchurch); S. E. Rodbourn (London, N.15); Miss M. S. Simpson (Belfast); Miss K. M. Stocks (Sidcup)

C	O	M	E	D	Y	U	S	E	F	U	L	L	Y
H	I	E	A	P	I	E	E						
A	T	C	R	O	S	S	P	U	R	P	O	S	E
M	H	D	A	R	S	E	L	M					
B	R	I	G	A	N	D	A	G	E	R	I	T	A
E	N	R	R	E	E	Y	E	N					
R	I	G	H	T	F	U	L	L					
Y	M	R	M	B	I	H	E	G					
S	A	K	E	R	F	R	O	N	T	A	G	E	
C	L	E	C	O	K	R	N						
B	I	L	Y	R	O	S	A	D	A	R	T	L	E
P	E	M	F	D	L	E	V						
P	O	C	K	E	T	F	U	L	L	O	F	R	Y
E	H	E	E	Y	U	I	S						
R	O	O	F	T	R	E	E	A	D	E	S	T	E

NOTES

1A. To Horace Mann, 1770. 2D. 'Hamlet' 3. 2. 5D. Spurgeon, City Temp. 6D. Martin Chuzzlewit, Chap. 39. 7D. Author of the 'Saint' series. 13D. 'Friendship'. 21D. Rape of the Lock, Canto 3, line 117. 22A. 'Lear' I, 227. 23A. David Copperfield Chap 20. 26A. Derry and Toms' roof-garden in Kensington.

CROSSWORD RULES.—(1) Entries should be on the printed diagram and envelopes containing them should be addressed to the Editor of THE LISTENER, Broadcasting House, London, W.1, and should be marked 'Crossword' in the left-hand top corner. (2) Clues are not normally given for words of two letters. There are no cryptic traps. Each competitor is allowed to submit only one solution, but legitimate alternatives are accepted. (3) Competitors may send in only a single joint solution. (4) Subject to the above rules the senders of the first five correct solutions opened are awarded a book token of the value specified. (5) In all matters connected with the crosswords the Editor's decision is final.

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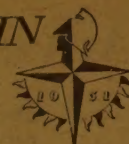
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